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The Public Square
A Survey of Religion, Culture, and Public Life

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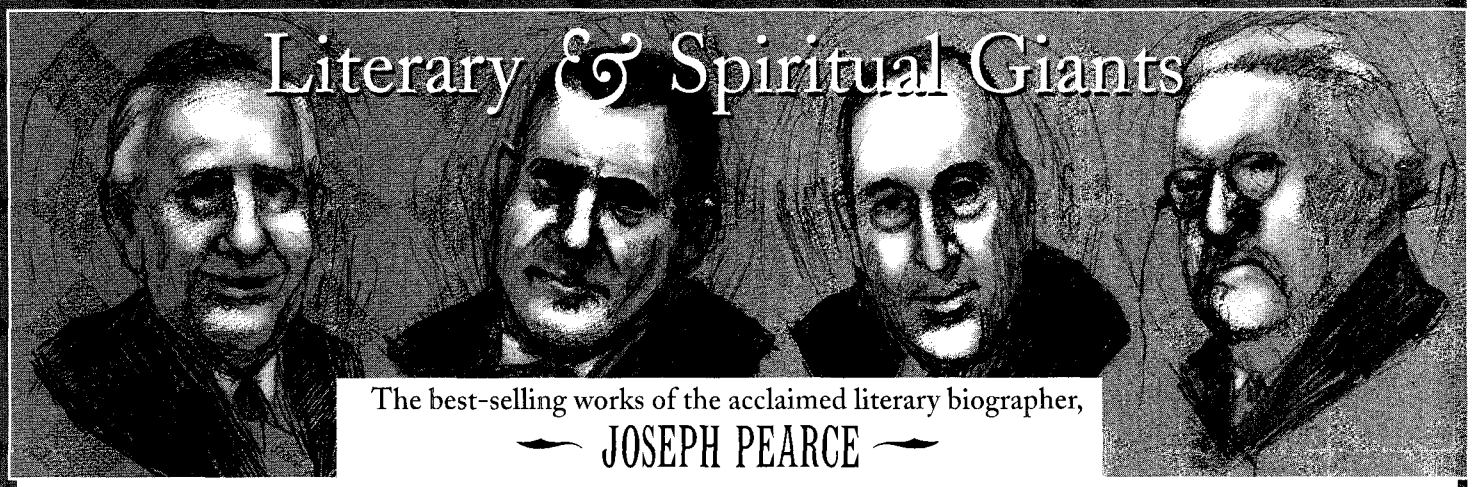
Literary & Spiritual Giants



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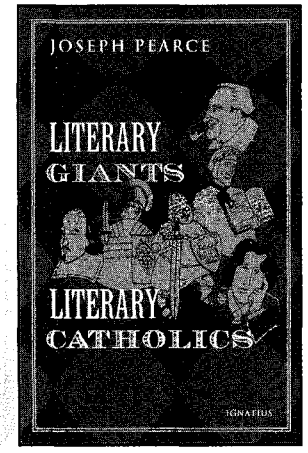

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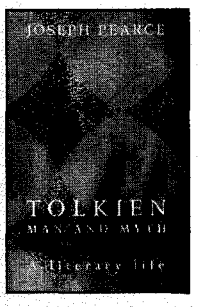

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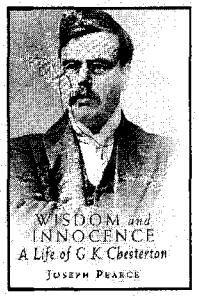

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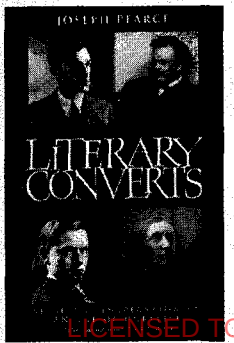

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CORRESPONDENCE

An Actual Buddhist

Peter J. Leithart does not know what he is talking about in his article "When East Is West" (April). Your printing of his work is a disservice to readers who might actually wish to know something about American Buddhism. Leithart has clearly not visited an American *zendo* to attend a *sesshin*. If he had, he would have seen that what goes on there is in no way "fused in the native goodwill, complacency, thoughtlessness, and optimism" of America. American Buddhists, in fact, practice exactly the same determined and unyielding set of meditation techniques that have been passed down for hundreds of years in China and Japan.

Leithart has not gone to a Tibetan-based dharma center like mine in Columbus, Ohio, which offers instruction in Buddhist practices. If he had, he would have encountered many religious traditions and teachings that stretch back through the full Buddhist history. He would have found plenty of rituals, icons, and devotional practices, too. He might have been uneasy with them when he found them, but he would not have been able to assert airily that American Buddhists have abandoned these things—not if he had any dedication to telling the truth about a religion that he does not practice.

I suspect that Leithart has not talked to an actual American Buddhist doing actual Buddhist practice under an actual Buddhist teacher. If he had, he would have discovered that there are tens of thousands of us who take our commitments in Buddhism seriously, make every effort to keep them in the traditional way, and have every hope of reaping spiritual benefits. Leithart concludes, "Westerners who convert to Buddhism are frequently attracted to a form of Buddhism that is the creation of the modern world." That is claptrap.

Joseph Marshall
Karma Thegsum Choling
Columbus, Ohio

Peter Leithart replies:

Joseph Marshall is right about the limits of my research. In preparing the article, I neither visited a zendo, nor attended a sesshin, nor interviewed Buddhist teachers. But my article was largely a summary of the work of scholars of Buddhism who have devoted years to doing all those things, and the conclusions I draw are based on their research. Nowhere did I suggest that there are *no* traditional Buddhists in the West (I asserted quite the contrary, in fact), only that many modern Western Buddhists, including some high-profile ones, are more modern-Western than Buddhist. (For the record, I would say, and often do say, the same about modern Western Christians.) In the end, Marshall makes my point for me: That repeated "actual" gives him away, for if there are "actual" Buddhists, presumably there are non-actual ones, and I suspect that for Marshall the non-actual ones are those who have sold their inheritance for modern-Western claptrap.

Conscience and the Church

In "The Inconvenient Conscience" (May) Cardinal Pell forthrightly exposes the incompatibility between the individualistic ideology of modern culture and the Christian gospel. And yet, Cardinal Pell's thinking is part of the problem. He begins with various moral issues that call for piecemeal moral conversions. But more important, though unmentioned by Cardinal Pell, is the lack of

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wholehearted religious conversion to Christ as Lord among many Catholics. Anyone who has accepted Christ as Lord or Master of his life will not seek personal autonomy through individualistic ideologies.

Paul VI noted in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* that many Catholics are sacramentalized before they are evangelized. And, we could add, before they make any commitment to Christ. In the early Church, it was not so. Baptism followed a decision to accept Christ as risen Lord. His power over sin and death was experienced in the Holy Spirit. This is what is lacking in the Church today. I love to baptize babies, and yet I wonder sometimes how parents can promise to bring up their children in the practice of the faith when they don't practice it themselves. The same can be said for all the little children who come to First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Not being morally able to reject the faith is not the same thing as voluntarily and freely accepting it.

Christ said: "No one puts a new patch on an old garment." In a sense, that is what Cardinal Pell is recommending: a patch here, a patch there. Actually, the whole fabric needs replacing. The bishops need to look at the way we initiate members into the body of Christ. Initiation must involve both a decision and an experience—in either order. If people do not experience the saving power of the living resurrected Christ, they will not be able to follow the narrow, winding road to life.

Paul A. Hottinger
Downers Grove, Illinois

Although there are many disturbing assertions in Cardinal Pell's essay, the greatest flaw is the implication that the Church has never been wrong about "central moral teachings." What about slavery? Usury? Religious freedom? The Church teaching concerning usury, for instance, has not, to the best of my knowledge, been abrogated and yet, today, the Vatican Bank has no qualms about charging interest to those who obtain loans through its auspices. Perhaps Cardinal Pell could explain what is going on here.

And, according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "the seventh commandment forbids acts or enterprises that for any reason—selfish or ideological, commercial or totalitarian—lead to the enslavement of human beings, to their being bought, sold and exchanged like merchandise, in disregard for their personal dignity." This, of course, would have been news to the slaves who toiled for popes, saints, and religious orders. Did we invent the seventh commandment in the mid-twentieth century? Should an abolitionist have followed his or her conscience against the teaching, and actual practice, of the Church? The issue of conscience and the Church is not as straightforward as Cardinal Pell would like.

The Rev. Bruce Downs
Corpus Christi Catholic Church
Phoenix, Arizona

George Cardinal Pell replies:

I agree wholeheartedly with Paul Hottinger on the fundamental importance of total conversion to Christ and his teaching. One problem is that total conversion is infrequently attained and the Church is not restricted to those who are wholehearted in their conversion. My essay focused on the area of moral choice as one specific topic within a whole life lived under Christ as Lord. I do, however, think that people can believe they are genuine followers of Christ yet carry on "doing their own thing" morally. I think the test of whether conversion is indeed total is willingness to follow the Gospel of Christ and the teaching of his Church, and that includes the moral teachings.

In reply to Fr. Downs, there was no claim in my article that "the Church" has never been wrong on moral issues. My awareness of such inadequacies by its leaders and errors by particular teachers lies behind my enigmatic reference to "central moral teachings." For Catholics, however, "the most reliable authority is the Church." Moral teaching (and doctrinal teaching) develops organically. Thus it was on the very principles of the New Testament and of Christian moral tradition that abolitionists came to see, slowly, that slavery was morally wrong. They did not invent new principles here, but came slowly to understand what the moral teachings of the Church meant in this area of public life.

That Catholics of every era have failed to see or live up to all the implications of Church moral teaching does not mean that these teachings are wrong but just demonstrates the need for a teaching Church and the unreliability of many a conscience. Slavery was abolished by Christians who appealed to Christ's teaching, natural law and the Church's own best tradition. They did not appeal to their own consciences, and it would not have advanced their cause if they did.

Ethics at the End of Life

In "Living Life's End" (May), Gilbert Meilaender maintains "that if a possible treatment seems useless or quite burdensome for the patient, we are not under obligation to try it or continue it." Yet he later states, "it is hard to believe that we could withhold feeding while simultaneously withholding the intention that the patient die." In clinical situations, I have been with many families who withdrew feeding because it was useless, and did not have the direct intention of causing their loved one to die.

Kevin O'Rourke, O.P.
Neiswanger Institute for
Bioethics and Public Policy
Loyola University
Chicago, Illinois

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In an otherwise excellent article, Gilbert Meilaender makes an unconvincing distinction between respiratory and nutritional support. Withdrawing respiratory support is distinguished from intending the patient's death on the grounds that "one does not know for certain that a patient will be unable to breathe on his own." In normal practice, patients are "weaned" from a ventilator as their arterial blood chemistry is monitored; unfavorable results preclude further weaning. In certain patients with severe respiratory acidosis, it is morally certain that complete removal of respiratory support will cause coma and death. That such a patient may have spontaneous, but shallow and inadequate, respiration during this process would not seem to be morally significant.

Mechanical ventilation—with the painful blood-gas monitoring that it entails—is certainly burdensome, and withdrawal may be justified on these grounds. But this justification is not strengthened by feigning ignorance of the sure course of untreated acidotic respiratory failure.

Jon Edwards, MD
Wadsworth, Ohio

I appreciated Gilbert Meilaender's article very much, but I object to his use of the example of implanting a pacemaker for an Alzheimer's patient who has suffered a Stokes-Adams episode. I think the illustration, admittedly borrowed from Leon Kass, is an unfortunate choice in support of an important principle. As a Christian clinical cardiologist who has walked with families and patients through this circumstance more times than I can remember, I would like to offer an alternative.

The term "Stokes-Adams attack" has traditionally described a transient, sudden, and complete loss of consciousness caused by a high-grade atrioventricular heart block. The patient usually collapses with no opportunity to protect him or herself. As Meilaender points out, death from cardiac arrest is a risk. A much more common result, however, is a lacerated scalp, smashed orbit, fractured femoral head, subdural hematoma, or some combination of these. In addition, further damage to brain function may result from the lack of cerebral blood-flow during the attack.

A pacemaker can prevent standard Stokes-Adams attacks and end the collapses. Today's pacemakers can be implanted with only local anesthesia. Most pacemakers will last eight to twelve years before requiring replacement. While some may think pacemakers expensive, the cost must be considered in the context of the expense of the hospitalizations that follow a Stokes-Adams attack.

To relegate elderly people who experience Stokes-Adams episodes to repeated falls and injuries while we ponder the ethical dilemma of preventing versus permitting an easy exit via sudden cardiac death is naively sadistic. I know that is not Meilaender's intent. In counseling families who are trying to decide whether to implant a pacemaker in a loved one with Alzheimer's, I point out that our intent in such circumstances is not to prolong life aggressively, but to prevent the suffering caused by these terrifying episodes.

A much more fitting illustration of Meilaender's point is the question of implantation of an internal cardioverter/defibrillator in an Alzheimer's patient who has had a ventricular tachyarrhythmia (a fast heart rhythm). The goal here is to prevent the sudden cardiac death caused by a rhythm disturbance. After meeting with an understanding physician, families of patients such as those described by Meilaender frequently and appropriately decline such therapy. But by pressing the pacemaker illustration into service, Prof. Meilaender has obfuscated what is usually a straightforward clinical and ethical decision based on the legitimate goal of relieving suffering. He has promoted a misconception that creates mischief for families and physicians dealing with these difficult situations.

F. Earl Fyke III, MD
Mississippi Baptist Medical Center
Jackson, Mississippi

Gilbert Meilaender replies:

It will be easiest for me to reply in reverse order to these three letters. I take Dr. Fyke's letter as support for the general position I developed, even though he thinks the Stokes-Adams example is not well chosen. And he may be right about that (though his own conclusion, that the pacemaker should be implanted, moves in the direction that I had myself supported). I had noted that the result of a decision not to implant a pacemaker would not necessarily mean death but, rather, might mean an increasingly (and unnecessarily) debilitated life. Fyke's clinical experience enables him to provide further reasons for thinking so.

Dr. Edwards likewise makes a serious point, for which I thank him and about which I will think more. At the moment I'd note simply the following two brief points: The fact that an almost-certain result follows from an act does not in itself mean that this result was that act's intention. And the fact that patients can and have lived for years after being weaned from a respirator, but cannot live even for weeks after nutrition is removed, suggests that we should not too quickly fold both acts into the same kind of analysis.

Professor O'Rourke's brief letter is, I think, less helpful. When I wrote that "it is hard to believe that we could withhold feeding while simultaneously withholding the intention that the patient die," I was discussing specifically the circumstances of many PVS patients. In considering the morality of human actions, we may not describe the intention of our acts in any way we please. Thus, the

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bomber cannot target directly the hospital while claiming no intention to kill the innocent. Likewise, family members (even when we feel great sympathy for their plight) are not at liberty to describe their intentions in whatever way they find most comforting. I would like to assume that O'Rourke knows this, but that would then seem to suggest that his letter is somewhat disingenuous. I am not sure, therefore, what the most charitable response would be.

Schiavo Under the Law

In "The Legal Death of Terri Schiavo" (May) Robert T. Miller may be technically correct that the courts did not violate any of Terri Schiavo's constitutional rights, but I take exception to his defense of their findings. According to Miller, the judges involved followed current law in refusing to defend Schiavo. Apparently none of them found it unconscionable that Schiavo should be put to death in this manner. Could they not have followed the voice of conscience that so many other judges claim to hear when they override laws passed by the representatives of the people, as activist judges have been doing for the past thirty years? Why would anyone want to defend a lapse of moral conviction, as Miller does, choosing instead to put the blame on the culture of death? I am disappointed that someone who finds this judgment abhorrent would justify it in any way.

Marianne Linane, RN
Executive Director
National Association of
Pro-Life Nurses

I read with interest "The Legal Death of Terri Schiavo." Unfortunately, Miller's article only skims the surface of what is really a much more complex case than it seems. While I agree that Florida law permitted the result, the untimely termination of Terri Schiavo's life was not a foregone conclusion, and any judge along the way could easily have reversed course to save Schiavo's life if he or she had been so inclined.

Under the U.S. Constitution, persons are not to be deprived of life without due process of law. In the context of death-row inmates, due process has been interpreted to include representation by independent and competent counsel. Ms. Schiavo was never appointed independent counsel. Her family was of limited financial means and did not have full and timely access to her medical records, including a bone scan done in 1991 showing major trauma and broken bones. They were unable to protect their daughter's interests fully during the 2000 trial.

At the time of Schiavo's collapse in 1991, which resulted in her debilitating condition, the law in Florida permitted the removal of extraordinary means of medical care in the absence of a written directive upon a showing of evidence that this is what the person would have wanted. It wasn't until 1999 that the law was changed to include artificial means of nutrition and hydration as a form of extraordinary medical care. Thus, even if Schiavo stated to her husband prior to her collapse that she would not want to be kept alive by artificial means, in 1991 such means did not include artificial hydration and nutrition. Ms. Schiavo had a right to life at the time of her collapse, which meant not being deprived of food and water. Applying an *ex post facto* law to cause someone's death is certainly problematic under the Constitution.

Furthermore, while Mr. Schiavo was the preferred guardian under Florida law, nowhere was it mandated that he continue to serve as guardian if he developed a conflict of interest or if he failed to satisfy his duties as a guardian. Mr. Schiavo was living with his "fiancée" and fathered two children with her while seeking to remove his wife's feeding tube. The court could have granted a divorce and allowed her parents to take care of her. Moreover, Mr. Schiavo failed to file guardian reports as required under Florida law. The judge had the ability to remove Mr. Schiavo as guardian on that basis alone.

Another problem is that at least one of the so-called independent doctors upon whom the Court relied in concluding that Terri Schiavo was in a persistent vegetative state (PVS) was connected to the right-to-die movement. A factual determination that she was in a PVS was important, because if she was not then her feeding tube could not have been removed legally. The court accepted the right-to-die doctor's medical opinion and discounted other doctors who claimed that she was not in a PVS.

Perhaps the attorneys for her parents did not make the best legal arguments before the various courts, which would be understandable since legal proceedings were extremely rushed in the last weeks before her death. But to imply that the Court was required to do what it did ignores due process and the many applications of judicial discretion that could have come down on the side of life.

April Ishak
Havre de Grace, Maryland

I applaud Robert T. Miller's willingness to say that the action taken in the Schiavo case was murderous and that the outcome was substantively unjust. I also agree with him that the federal courts to which the case was appealed had very little precedent to support a ruling that Schiavo's federal rights had been violated. But I think that some additions and clarifications to Miller's comments about the legality of the action taken and the relevance of judicial usurpation to the case are in order.

First of all, there was not "clear and convincing evidence" that Schiavo

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would have wished to be dehydrated to death. This is the required legal standard under Florida precedent. The judge in the initial trial took a casual approach to the standard of evidence and directly violated the provision in Florida precedent that one was to "err on the side of life in dubious cases." Miller only mentions the "clear and convincing" standard in connection with the *Cruzan* federal precedent, and he is correct in saying that *Cruzan* allowed but did not require the states to use this standard. But Schiavo's parents were correct when they argued that, by not following its *own* requirements for such cases, Florida violated her federal due-process rights.

Moreover, there are several ways in which court action, rather than statutory law, caused Schiavo's death. First, the *Cruzan* ruling, by using the infamous notion of "substantive due process" and setting as a matter of constitutional right the "liberty" to refuse food and water by proxy when one is unconscious, made it far more difficult for states to protect people like Schiavo and set the stage for killings based on dubious conclusions about what the person "would have wished."

Second, the *Browning* ruling (1990) by the Florida Supreme Court required that the courts allow oral reports of oral statements by a now-unconscious person to count, at least in principle, as "clear and convincing evidence" of the person's wishes.

Third, the Florida Supreme Court declared "Terri's Law" (passed by the Florida legislature in 2003) unconstitutional on the questionable grounds that no legislative or executive action can reverse the effect of an earlier court order—that court orders must be "final" in their effects. That this is not jurisprudentially correct is demonstrated, for example, by the persistence of the governor's power of pardon for convicted murderers in Florida, which reverses the effect of previous death sentences.

In addition, when Miller states that Schiavo's killing was a private act by her husband and guardian despite its being "enforced by a court," he misses an important point: Although Judge Greer granted a petition by Michael Schiavo to be *allowed* to withdraw his wife's feeding tube in his original order in 2000, in 2005 Judge Greer *ordered* Schiavo to withdraw the tube. The importance of this order was underscored by a ruling by the Second District Court of Appeals in March of 2005, which said, "No matter who her guardian is, the guardian is required to obey the court order because the court, and not the guardian, has determined the decision that Ms. Schiavo herself would make." In other words, the state courts of Florida viewed themselves as acting directly in the role of Schiavo's proxy and requiring her guardian or guardians to carry out what the courts said were her wishes.

Lydia McGrew
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Robert T. Miller replies:

The correspondents and I all agree that when our courts permitted an innocent woman to be starved to death by those charged with her care, there occurred a catastrophic failure of civil society. We disagree as to the exact nature of that failure. In the article to which the correspondents are responding, I said that Terri Schiavo's death occurred in accordance with the law; in particular, I said that the federal courts involved in the case did not usurp politics to enforce their own notions of morality. I stand by that conclusion.

Conceding that the courts involved did not engage in judicial activism, Marianne Linane argues that they should have. In particular, she thinks that the courts should have ignored the law in order to do substantive justice and save Schiavo's life. The answer to this is obvious. The separation of the legislative and judicial functions is essential to protecting the safety and rights of individuals, for if judges go beyond the judicial function, then the outcome of cases will turn on the peculiar moral notions of individual judges, and we will have a government not of laws but of men. In a case like Terri Schiavo's, the temptation to ignore the law is strong, but we need to keep our heads and remember that the fundamental principles of our system of government serve very large interests, interests larger even than the life or death of a single individual. This, incidentally, is why men have been willing to die for these principles.

April Ishak's position is more complicated. She concedes that existing law permitted the result in the Schiavo case but says that many legal questions determined in the case were sufficiently close that, consistent with the law, a court could have resolved these questions in a way that would have changed the ultimate outcome. In other words, Ishak thinks that the law *permitted* Schiavo's death but did not *require* it, and she blames me for taking this latter and stronger position.

We should distinguish here between the federal issues arising under the special act of Congress and settled in federal courts, and the state law issues earlier settled in Florida state courts. It was the federal issues that I discussed in my article, and these issues (including the ones Ishak rehearses in her letter) were all so plainly without merit that, consistent with the law, the federal courts had no choice but to rule as they did. Ishak may think otherwise, but I am confident she is mistaken.

Among the state law issues, however, there were undoubtedly some that the courts could have resolved otherwise than they did, thus changing the outcome of the case.

Moreover, there is no need to raise obscure issues about medical records or guardian reports or the qualifications of expert witnesses, none of which directly affected the ultimate

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result. Rather, the crucial issue in the state litigation was whether there was clear and convincing evidence that Schiavo would have wanted to be dehydrated to death. As I read the record, the evidence was not clear and convincing, and I think the Florida judge who held otherwise was mistaken. To this extent, I agree with Ishak.

But an error by a judge as to whether there exists clear and convincing evidence is not an imposition by the judge of his own moral values to override the law; it is an error in applying a legal standard to particular facts. Sometimes, a judge makes such an error because he is biased in favor of a particular result, and when this happens, the judge is guilty of especially poor judging.

Nevertheless, such an error is one made in carrying out a judicial function; it is not a usurpation by the judiciary of a legislative function. I never said that every ruling by every judge in every stage of the Schiavo litigation was legally unassailable, only that the final deadly result was not caused by that very special kind of miscreancy that is a judicial usurpation of politics. None of Ishak's claims, even if correct, touches that point.

Lydia McGrew also raises several important questions. She too thinks that there was no clear and convincing evidence that Terri Schiavo would have wanted to be dehydrated to death, and, as I said above, I agree. But McGrew then says that when the trial court mistakenly found that there was such evidence, it violated Schiavo's federal due-process rights. This is not the law. In general, the right to due process is just that—a right to certain kinds of fair procedures, not the right to a substantively correct outcome from such procedures. When the process has been correct but the result is mistaken, the disappointed party's remedy is not to claim a violation of due process but to appeal the erroneous judgment to a higher court.

This, of course, Schiavo's parents did. The Florida appellate court hearing their appeal was required under the law to determine not whether the lower court made the right ruling but whether the evidence was legally sufficient to support the ruling that court made. Although the lower court's decision may well have been wrong, it was not so wrong as to allow an appellate court to conclude that the evidence was insufficient as a matter of law, and the Florida appellate court so held. But even if the Florida appellate court had erred in doing so, Schiavo's due process rights would still not have been violated. She would have received due process, albeit with a mistaken result. Such unfortunate possibilities are inevitable in any system run by human beings.

McGrew also correctly points out that *Cruzan*, *Browning*, and the ruling of the Florida Supreme Court that struck down Terri's Law contributed to the result in the Schiavo case. This is true, but at least with respect to *Cruzan* and *Browning*, the causation was rather remote.

Moreover, some of McGrew's criticisms of these cases seem to me misguided. The opinion in *Cruzan*, for example, was authored by Chief Justice Rehnquist and joined by Justice Scalia; it is not an example of judicial activism. Although the case recognized a liberty interest under the Fourteenth Amendment in refusing artificial hydration and nutrition, nevertheless, even if the Court had held otherwise, the result would have been at most that states are constitutionally *permitted* to provide artificial hydration and nutrition to unwilling individuals, not that those states would have been *required* to do so.

Unless state legislatures passed laws requiring such hydration and nutrition, which is very implausible, the practical result would have been the same. Once again, the problem is not with our courts.

McGrew objects to *Browning* because it held that evidence about past oral statements by a now incompetent person may constitute clear and convincing evidence of the person's wishes. She is right that there is a danger of abuse here, but the holding is consistent with established rules of law in other areas, such as civil fraud cases. As to the Florida Supreme Court's decision striking down Terri's Law, the act presented complex and novel questions about the separation of powers; while the decision may be wrong, merely pointing to the executive's pardon power, which has been established in the law for centuries, does not begin to settle the issue.

Finally, McGrew says that the trial court's order enforcing what it took to be Schiavo's wishes was in fact state action (and thus subject to review under the Fourteenth Amendment) because the court's order applied to any guardian Schiavo may have had, not just her husband, and because the court acted as finder of fact in determining Schiavo's wishes. But this is not sufficient to constitute state action under the law.

An example will make this clear. Say that a man dies, leaving a will, the language of which is ambiguous. A court makes factual findings regarding the testator's intent and holds that the disputed language creates legacies for only two of the testator's three children. The court then orders the executor of the estate, whoever he may be, to distribute the property of the estate accordingly. The disappointed child complains that the result discriminates against him in violation of his equal protection rights under the Fourteenth Amendment. He loses, of course, because there was no state action here: The discrimination, if there was any, was the act of the testator, not the court that determined and enforced the testator's wishes. The order in the Schiavo case was analogous, and so the

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federal courts were clearly right when they held that there was no state action subject to review under the Fourteenth Amendment.

Mormon Bioethics

I must point out that the quotation from Charles Colson in reference to Mitt Romney (While We're At It, May) misrepresents the belief of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. LDS doctrine states that each human person existed as a spirit prior to the beginning of mortal human life. (There is no reincarnation; the premortal existence is as spirit only.) There is no official LDS doctrine on when the premortal spirit enters or animates the body, and contrary to Colson's assertion there is no unified belief among LDS church members on this point.

For those of us of the LDS faith, the lack of doctrine on when the spirit unites with the body should not lead to a devaluing of the early stages of human life. In 1985, for example, LDS Apostle Russell M. Nelson (who, prior to his calling to the apostleship, was a physician) stated that "it is not a question of when 'meaningful life' begins or when the spirit 'quickens' the body. In the biological sciences, it is known that life begins when two germ cells [the sperm and the egg] unite to become one cell, bringing together twenty-three chromosomes from both the father and the mother.

These chromosomes contain thousands of genes. In a marvelous process involving a combination of genetic coding by which all the basic human characteristics of the unborn person are established, a new DNA complex is formed.

A continuum of growth results in a new human being. The onset of life is not a debatable issue, but a fact of science."

It would be more accurate to say that some prominent LDS church members (most notably, Senator Orrin Hatch) have come to the conclusion that life begins at implantation. In taking this position, they are influenced by the many scientists who seek to justify research that is destructive of human embryos. Fortunately, Mitt Romney and other LDS church members understand the importance of respect for human life from its earliest stages.

Joseph B. Stanford, MD
University of Utah
Salt Lake City, Utah

The NCC on TV

In "The Public Square" (May), Richard John Neuhaus gloats over some of the nonsense of the liberal left in past years. As one who identifies himself with the liberal left, I readily admit that it sometimes harbors nonsense, and Neuhaus (whom I regard as a long-time friend and who I hope still regards me as a friendly adversary) has a right to gloat over its misadventures. But surely he is mistaken when he takes satisfaction in *60 Minutes*' negative coverage of the National Council of Churches in 1981.

In December of 2002, Larry King interviewed Don Hewitt, executive producer of *60 Minutes*, and asked whether he had any regrets about his work. Hewitt replied: "Yes, we once . . . took off on the National Council of Churches as being left wing and radical, and a lot of nonsense. And the next morning I got a congratulatory call from every redneck bishop in America, and I thought, Oh my God, we must have done something wrong last night."

Neuhaus, like all of us in our polemics, has a right to ridicule the silly moments of his adversaries, but he seems unaware of the foolishness of the show he delights in and of its retraction by its producer.

Roger L. Shinn
Southbury, Connecticut

RJN replies:

I do count Roger Shinn as a friend but I don't know why he or I or anyone else should think Don Hewitt is an authority on the misadventures of the National Council of Churches.

Correction:

In the June/July issue we mentioned a report on religion reporting by the "school of journalism at Northwestern University." The report was from the Media Management Center at Northwestern, which is distinct from the school's Medill School of Journalism.

Clarification:

The August-September issue included a spoof on reactions to the election of Pope Benedict in the form of a fictional account of reactions to the election of Jesus as Messiah. The spoof carried the byline of "Ian Fisher, Rome correspondent for the *New York Times*." The spoof was not written by Ian Fisher, and we regret any confusion caused on this score.

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Opinion

The Design of Evolution

Stephen M. Barr

Catholic theology has never really had a quarrel with the idea that the present species of plants and animals are the result of a long process of evolution—or with the idea that this process has unfolded according to natural laws. As the 1909 *Catholic Encyclopedia* put it, these ideas seem to be "in perfect agreement with the Christian conception of the universe."

Catholic theologians were more hesitant with respect to the origin of the human race, but even here, the old encyclopedia admitted, evolution of the human body is "*per se* not improbable" and a version of it had "been propounded by St. Augustine." The crucial doctrinal point was that the human soul, being spiritual, could not be the result of any merely material process: biological evolution any more than sexual reproduction. The soul must be conferred on each person by a special creative act of God. And so the Church is required to reject atheistic and materialistic philosophies of evolution, which deny the existence of a Creator or His providential governance of the world. As long as evolutionary theory confined itself to properly biological questions, however, it was considered benign.

This was the view that was taught to generations of children in Catholic schools. The first formal statement on evolution by the magisterium did not come until the encyclical letter *Humani Generis* of Pope Pius XII in 1950. The only point that the pontiff asserted as definitely dogmatic was that the human soul was not the product of evolution. As for the human body, Pius noted, its evolution from those of lower animals could be investigated as a scientific hypothesis, so long as no conclusions were made rashly.

This is how things stood for another half century. Then, in 1996, in a letter to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Pope John Paul II acknowledged that the theory of evolution is now recognized as "more than a hypothesis," thanks to impressive and converging evidence coming from a variety of fields. He reiterated what he called the "essential point" made by Pius XII, namely that "if the human body takes its origin from pre-existent living matter, [nevertheless] the spiritual soul is immediately created by God."

Some commentators in the scientific and popular press took this statement to mean the Church had once rejected evolution and was now at last throwing in the towel. The truth is that Pius XII, though cautious, was clearly willing to let the scientific chips fall where they might; and John Paul II was simply noting the obvious fact that a lot of chips had since fallen. Nevertheless, John Paul's statement was a welcome reminder of the Church's real attitude toward empirical science. It was followed in 2004 by a lengthy document from the International Theological Commission (headed by Cardinal Ratzinger) entitled *Communion and Stewardship: Human Persons Created in the Image of God.* This important document contained, along with much else, a lucid and careful analysis of evolution and its relation to Catholic teaching.

So why did Christoph Schönborn, the cardinal archbishop of Vienna, lash out this summer at neo-Darwinism? In an opinion piece for the *New York Times* on July 7, he reacted indignantly to the suggestion that "the Catholic Church has no problem with the notion of 'evolution' as used by mainstream biologists—that is, synonymous with neo-Darwinism." Brushing off the 1996 statement of John Paul II as "vague and unimportant," he cited other evidence (including statements by the late pope, sentences from *Communion and Stewardship* and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and a line from the new Pope Benedict XVI's installation homily) to make the case that neo-Darwinism is in fact incompatible with Catholic teaching.

In the United States, the harsh questions and mocking comments came fast and furious. Could it really be that the modern Church is condemning a scientific theory? How much doctrinal weight does Schönborn's article have? (After all, if a letter by a pope addressed to scientists can be called "unimportant," how important can a letter by a cardinal to the readers of a newspaper be?) Why did he write it? (It appears that it was done at the urging and with the assistance of his friend Mark Ryland, a philanthropist and ardent champion of the anti-Darwinian Intelligent Design movement.) And what, precisely, was the cardinal saying?

The Church in recent centuries has avoided taking sides in intramural scientific disputes—which means the form as well as the content of the cardinal's article came as a shock. The issues it treats, having chiefly to do with the relation of chance and randomness to divine providence, are extremely subtle and cannot be dealt with adequately in the space of a newspaper column. It was nearly inevitable, therefore, that distinc-

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tions would get lost, terms would be ill-defined, and issues would be conflated.

By saying that "neo-Darwinism" is "synonymous" with "'evolution' as used by mainstream biologists," Schönborn indicates that he means the term as commonly understood among scientists. As so understood, neo-Darwinism is based on the idea that the mainspring of evolution is natural selection acting on random genetic variation. Elsewhere in his article, however, the cardinal gives another definition: "evolution in the neo-Darwinian sense [is] an unguided, unplanned process of random variation and natural selection." This is the central misstep of Cardinal Schönborn's article. He has slipped into the definition of a *scientific* theory, neo-Darwinism, the words "unplanned" and "unguided," which are fraught with *theological* meaning.

The line he quotes from *Communion and Stewardship* may seem to support him: "An unguided evolutionary process—one that falls outside the bounds of divine providence—simply cannot exist." And, since it is a fundamental Christian doctrine that God's providential plan extends to all events in the universe, nothing that happens can be "unplanned" as far as God is concerned.

But *Communion and Stewardship* also explicitly warns that the word "random" as used by biologists, chemists, physicists, and mathematicians in their technical work does not have the same meaning as the words "unguided" and "unplanned" as used in doctrinal statements of the Church. In common speech, "random" is often used to mean "uncaused," "meaningless," "inexplicable," or "pointless." And there is no question that some biologists, when they explain evolution to the public or to hapless students, do argue from the "randomness" of genetic mutations to the philosophical conclusion that the history of life is "unguided" and "unplanned." Some do this because of an anti-religious animus, while others are simply careless.

When scientists are actually doing science, however, they do not use the words "unguided" and "unplanned." The Institute for Scientific Information's well-known *Science Citation Index* reveals that only 48 papers exist in the scientific literature with the word "unguided" in the title, most having to do with missiles. Only 467 have the word "unplanned," almost all referring to pregnancies or medical procedures. By contrast there are 52,633 papers with "random" in the title, from all fields of scientific research. The word "random" is a basic technical term in most branches of science. It is used to discuss the motions of molecules in a gas, the fluctuations of quantum fields, noise in electronic devices, and the statistical errors in a data set, to give but a few examples. So if the word "random" necessarily entails the idea that some events are "unguided" in the sense of falling "outside of the bounds of divine providence," we should have to condemn as incompatible with Christian faith a great deal of modern physics, chemistry, geology, and astronomy, as well as biology.

This is absurd, of course. The word "random" as used in science does not mean uncaused, unplanned, or inexplicable; it means uncorrelated. My children like to observe the license plates of the cars that pass us on the highway, to see which states they are from. The sequence of states exhibits a degree of randomness: a car from Kentucky, then New Jersey, then Florida, and so on—because the cars are uncorrelated: Knowing where one car comes from tells us nothing about where the next one comes from. And yet, each car comes to that place at that time for a reason. Each trip is planned, each guided by some map and schedule. Each driver's trip fits into the story of his life in some intelligible way, though the story of these drivers' lives are not usually closely correlated with the other drivers' lives.

Or consider this analogy. Prose, unlike a sonnet, has lines with final syllables that do not rhyme. The sequence those syllables form will therefore exhibit randomness. But this does not mean a prose work is "unguided" or "unplanned." True enough, the writer did not select the words with an eye to rhyming them, imposing on them that particular kind of correlation. But the words are still chosen. So God, though he planned His work with infinite care, may not have chosen to impose certain kinds of correlations on certain kinds of events, and the motions of the different molecules in a gas, for example, may exhibit no statistically verifiable correlation.

We should distinguish between what we may call "statistical randomness," which implies nothing about whether a process was planned or guided, and "randomness" in other senses. Statistical randomness, based on the lack of correlation among things or events, can be exploited to understand and explain phenomena through the use of probability theory. We may wish to determine, for example, whether the incidence of cancer in a certain county is consistent with statistical expectations, or whether there is some as-yet-unknown causal factor at work. By looking at the actuarial statistics, the age profile, and so on, one can compute the expected number of deaths due to cancer and see whether there is a statistically significant deviation from it. Implicit in all such computations are assumptions about randomness. Entire subfields in science (such as "statistical mechanics") are based on these methods: The properties of gases, liquids, and solids, for instance, can be understood and accurately calculated by methods that make assumptions about the randomness of molecular and atomic motions.

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The promoters of the anti-Darwinian Intelligent Design movement usually admit that the ideas of statistical randomness, probability, and chance can be part of legitimate explanation of phenomena. They argue instead that to be able to make a scientific inference of "design" in some set of data one must first exclude other explanations, including "chance." The members of the International Theological Commission were clearly referring to the Intelligent Design movement when they wrote in *Communion and Stewardship*: "A growing body of scientific critics of neo-Darwinism point to evidence of design (*e.g.*, biological structures that exhibit specified complexity) that, in their view, cannot be explained in terms of a purely contingent process and that neo-Darwinians have ignored or misinterpreted. The nub of this currently lively disagreement involves scientific observation and generalization concerning whether the available data support inferences of design or chance, and cannot be settled by theology."

If an "inference of chance" as part of the explanation of a phenomenon cannot be ruled out on theological grounds, then the competing claims of neo-Darwinians and their Intelligent Design critics about biological complexity cannot be settled by theology. To their credit, many of the best writers in the Intelligent Design movement, including William Dembski and Michael Behe, also insist the issue is one to be settled scientifically.

We cannot settle the issue of the role of "chance" in evolution theologically, because God is omnipotent and can therefore produce effects in different ways. Suppose a man wants to see a particular poker hand dealt. If he deals from a single shuffled deck, his chance of seeing a royal straight flush is 1 in 649,740. So he might decide to stack the deck, introducing the right correlations into the deck before dealing. Alternatively, he might decide to deal a hand from each of a billion shuffled decks. In that case the desired hand will turn up almost infallibly. (The chances it will not are infinitesimal: 10^{-669}.) In which way did God make life? Was the molecular deck "stacked" or "shuffled"?

This poker analogy is weak, of course. We don't know the order of a shuffled deck—that's one reason we shuffle it. But God knows all the details of the universe from all eternity. He knows what's in the cards. The scientist and the poker player do not look at things from God's point of view, however, and so they talk about "probabilities."

People have used the words "random," "probability," "chance," for millennia without anyone imagining that it must always imply a denial of divine providence. "I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill, but time and *chance* happeneth to them all," as Ecclesiastes notes. Or, to make the point in dry technical terms, there is not a perfect correlation between being strong and winning or between having bread and being wise.

Why is there statistical randomness and lack of correlation in our world? It is because events do not march in lockstep, according to some simple formula, but are part of a vastly complex web of contingency. The notion of contingency is important in Catholic theology, and it is intimately connected to what in ordinary speech would be called "chance."

Communion and Stewardship settles this point. "Many neo-Darwinian scientists, as well as some of their critics, have concluded that if evolution is a radically contingent materialistic process driven by natural selection and random genetic variation, then there can be no place in it for divine providential causality," the document observes. "But it is important to note that, according to the Catholic understanding of divine causality, true contingency in the created order is not incompatible with a purposeful divine providence. Divine causality and created causality radically differ in kind and not only in degree. Thus, even the outcome of a purely contingent natural process can nonetheless fall within God's providential plan. According to St. Thomas Aquinas: 'The effect of divine providence is not only that things should happen somehow, but that they should happen either by necessity or by contingency. Therefore, whatsoever divine providence ordains to happen infallibly and of necessity, happens infallibly and of necessity; and that happens from contingency, which the divine providence conceives to happen from contingency.' In the Catholic perspective, neo-Darwinians who adduce random genetic variation and natural selection as evidence that the process of evolution is absolutely unguided are straying beyond what can be demonstrated by science."

It is not neo-Darwinists as such that are being criticized here, but only the invalid inference drawn by "many" of them (along with "some of their critics") that the putative "randomness" of genetic variation necessarily implies an "absolutely unguided" process. It is clearly the intention of this passage to distinguish sharply the actual hypotheses of legitimate science from the philosophical errors often mistakenly thought to follow from them.

In his article, Schönborn cites the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "We believe that God created the world according to His wisdom. It is not the product of any necessity whatever, nor of blind fate or chance." And yet, it is one thing to say that the whole world is a product of chance and the existence of the universe a

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fluke, and quite another to say that within the universe there is statistical randomness. The cardinal also quotes the following passage from an address of the late pope: "To all these indications of the existence of God the Creator, some oppose the power of chance or of the proper mechanisms of matter. To speak of chance for a universe which presents such a complex organization in its elements and marvelous finality in its life would be equivalent to giving up the search for an explanation of the world as it appears to us." Indeed. But to employ arguments in science based on statistical randomness and probability is not necessarily to "oppose" the idea of chance to the existence of God the Creator.

Even within the neo-Darwinian framework, there are many ways that one could see evidence of that "finality" (the directedness of the universe and life) to which John Paul II refers. The possibility of an evolutionary process that could produce the marvelously intricate forms we see presupposes the existence of a universe whose structure, matter, processes, and laws are of a special character. This is the lesson of the many "anthropic coincidences" that have been identified by physicists and chemists. It is also quite likely, as suggested by the eminent neo-Darwinian biologist Simon Conway Morris, that certain evolutionary endpoints (or "solutions") are built into the rules of physics and chemistry, so that the "random variations" keep ending up at the same destinations, somewhat as meandering rivers always find the sea. In his book *Life's Solution*, Morris adduces much impressive evidence of such evolutionary tropisms. And, of course, we must never forget that each of us has spiritual powers of intellect, rationality, and freedom that cannot be accounted for by mere biology, whether as conceived by neo-Darwinians or their Intelligent Design critics.

I personally am not at all sure that the neo-Darwinian framework is a sufficient one for biology. But if it turns out to be so, it would in no way invalidate what Pope Benedict has said: "We are not some casual and meaningless product of evolution. Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary." In his *New York Times* article, Cardinal Schönborn understandably wanted to counter those neo-Darwinian advocates who claim that the theory of evolution precludes a Creator's providential guidance of creation. Regrettably, he ended up giving credibility to their claim and obscuring the clear teaching of the Church that no truth of science can contradict the truth of revelation.

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The New Europes

Richard John Neuhaus

Year after year since the evil empire's fall, the promise of Poland increases. If history is capable of decency, the world will forever acknowledge its debt to Poland for the gift of Karol Wojtyla, John Paul the Great—for his universal appeal was inextricably joined to the particularity of his Polishness.

That particularity is strikingly underscored in the book published shortly before his death and based upon interviews of a decade earlier, *Memory and Identity*. Against the airy abstractions of secular modernity, John Paul displayed a way of being in the world that is formed by keeping faith with the memories, sufferings, and aspirations of a most particular people. He was that rare thing: a whole man. The many dimensions of his interests, energies, gifts, and inspirations were all of a piece. He refused modernity's imperious demand to choose between the universal and the particular, the world and his place in the world. Critics referred to him as the "Polish pope," implying that he was parochial. Far from apologizing for who he was, he invited others to be the best of who they are. It was as a son of Poland that he was a father to the world.

There is no nation today whose identity is so attached to one person as is Poland's to John Paul. It is not certain that this will continue to be the case. Poland has its fair share of airy universalists, in the academy and the media, who agitate the cause of transcending the embarrassment of particularity. No doubt there are aspects of Polish life and history—as is true of the life and history of any people—that should be transcended. But these universalists have what they fancy to be a bigger idea, the transcending of the heart of what it means to be Polish. They still subscribe to a "secularization theory" that has now been abandoned by most scholars in the rest of the world.

The old idea was that the more modern a society becomes the more secular it will become. America, the most modern of societies, never fit the theory, giving rise to talk about "American exceptionalism." Now, in a time of resurgent religion, both personal and public, it is evident that America is pretty much in step with the rest of the world. If we are to look for "exceptionalism," we look instead to western Europe, where secularization appears to be almost totally triumphant.

Even that appearance, however, may be misleading. Observers are struck by the small but dynamic movements of Christian renewal in, for example, France and

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Germany. Moreover, some studies suggest that the general population of western Europe is not as secular as many think. This phenomenon is labeled "believing but not belonging." In other words, people believe more than is supposed, but they are disinclined to participate in the activities and institutions that once gave social expression to the faith to which many, however tenuously, still adhere.

The institutional bearer of the old secularization theory today is the European Union and its Brussels-based bureaucracy. The refusal to acknowledge Christianity in the now-rejected constitution's reference to Europe's cultural identity and the repudiation of Rocco Buttiglione as justice minister because of his Catholic faith are well known. The EU is a proposal for a future that has no past—or, more precisely, a future that is fleeing its past.

Poland is now a member of the EU and there are perceived economic benefits to membership. In the next few years, the EU—meaning chiefly Germany, France, and Great Britain—will be pouring billions in economic aid into Poland and its Central European neighbors, in the hope of an economic "lift off" such as has happened in Ireland. The idea is that, as these countries enter the circle of high productivity, they will in turn be able to help expand the circle to include nations such as Romania and Bulgaria.

But in Poland, the overriding reason for being part of the EU is geopolitical. As one Polish friend puts it, "Better the European Union than the Soviet Union." The Soviet Union is, of course, a thing of the past, but Russia is the ever-threatening thing of the past, present, and future. Poles are determined that never again will it be in doubt whether Poland is part of the West.

The intellectual universalists of Poland, however, also have another agenda. The "decision for Europe" means a decision to transcend particularity, to embrace modernity, and therefore to become a secular society on the model of western Europe. Polish particularity is most powerfully entrenched in Polish Catholicism. For a thousand years of tortured history, up through the horrors of Nazism and Communism, the Church has been the bulwark of resistance and the rallying point of national identity. The depiction of Polish history as the continuing story of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ is very much alive, not least in the poetry of John Paul and in the book *Memory and Identity*.

Very much unlike other countries, such as the neighboring Czech Republic, the Church in Poland has flourished in the post-Communist years. It is a Church of both the old and the young, of crowded Masses, of long lines at the confessional, of more than ample vocations to the priesthood and religious life, and of youth movements of a stunning variety. The last is notably evident in the remarkable youth apostolates of the Dominicans but is by no means limited to the Dominicans. In short, the very Catholic particularity—and universal vision derived from that particularity—embodied in the life and witness of John Paul is the most striking characteristic of contemporary Poland.

Those who subscribe to the old secularization theory, however, believe—and, in many cases, hope—that this will change over time. They could turn out to be right. But recent studies (notably a national survey conducted in July 2005) suggest that Poles are moving closer to, rather than away from, the Church's teaching on controverted moral issues. Since 2003, the strong and steady opposition to abortion has increased by 14 percent. There is an identical increase in opposition to doctor-assisted suicide. Only eight percent favor same-sex marriage, while express opposition has risen to 85 percent. Although the ordination of women is not within the realm of real-world possibilities, the media universalists have made common cause with Catholic progressives in promoting it—despite which, support for that change has fallen from 17 to 12 percent over the last two years, with 74 percent strongly opposed. There is no change, however, on artificial contraception, which the great majority (71 percent) approves.

For obvious reasons, too much should not be made of surveys of public opinion, but there are those who think that the historic link between being Polish and being Catholic is not weakening and may be growing stronger. They note that, under Nazism and Communism, the Church had a monopoly on virtue and provided the only sphere of freedom, however limited. Under current conditions, other institutions and worldviews are, as is to be expected, competing with the Church. Still, it appears the Church is holding its own, and maybe doing somewhat more than holding its own.

While the reasons for allying with the EU are compelling, there is anxiety about being "absorbed" into the "New Europe." The EU may be the Other but, to paraphrase Gertrude Stein, there is little otherness there. The New Europe vaguely invoked by the EU is not a substantive Other. People know what it means to be Polish, but what does it mean to be a New European except that one is not Polish, or at least not very Polish? Being Polish has almost always meant being very Polish. There is something painfully artificial, a powerful feel of "let's pretend," in the EU's reach toward the Enlightenment ideal of "Universal Humanity" while employing tens of thousands of translators to facilitate communication among

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peoples of twenty-one official and eighteen unofficial languages. All along, everybody knows that, as France openly declares and Germany quietly seconds, the dominant powers will not bend in compromising their national identities. The Brits have the decency to acknowledge that there is a real problem with this putative universalism, and they at least ask the awkward questions as they move step by step, the questions unanswered, toward unification.

In an aside that was quickly inflated by pundits into a doctrinal pronouncement, Donald Rumsfeld referred to "old Europe" and "new Europe," meaning by the latter those countries, such as Poland, still newly liberated from the Soviet empire and, not incidentally, more supportive of America's world leadership. These countries have fresh memories of America's indispensable part in their liberation, even as they do not forget America's complicity at Yalta in delivering them to the mercies of the Soviet Union in the first place. President Bush's candid acknowledgment of that betrayal in his May 2005 speech in Latvia has, it is widely believed, helped to heal the wound of that old memory. Now "new Europe" contemplates the "New Europe" promoted by the "old Europe" and worries about the next hegemony that history may have in store for it.

As one Polish political scientist said, "Whatever it turns out to be, the EU is underway and Poland has no choice but to be part of it." Even after the shock of the rejection of the EU constitution by popular referenda in France and the Netherlands this spring, there still remains a sense of inevitability about the EU itself. At its heart the EU project is driven by fear and resentment: the Europeans' fear of themselves and resentment of America. A top official in Brussels recently asked why European unity is necessary. The answer, he said, is to be found in the military cemeteries all over the continent. That answer is undeniable, if not sufficient. Twice in the century past, Europe threw itself and much of the world with it into convulsions of unprecedented destruction. Given the indelibly imprinted memory of those horrors and the flaccid military capacities of European states today, some contend that Europe's fear of Europe's propensity for warring madness is greatly exaggerated. But grievances and conflicting ambitions can erupt unpredictably, stirring national passions and once again unleashing the dogs of war. Europe's fear of Europe, while it may not be an inspiring vision for anything so grand as its architects intend the EU to be, is not irrational.

Nor should we be surprised by the European resentment of the United States. France once counted, and counted mightily, in world affairs; pretensions to the grandeur that once was do not gracefully give way. As for Germany, it will not forever stifle in guilt and shame its desire to have again a place in the sun, a desire it dare not try to realize on its own but can perhaps be found in part through an EU that stands up to the American hegemony. Or, with the return of the Christian Democrats to power, Germany may set aside resentment in favor of its own "special relationship" with the United States, joining other EU members in further isolating France. England, meanwhile, is both a great power in Europe and America's junior partner in advancing a democratic new world order. To the extent that these and other countries see the controlling story line of their future in the EU, it is a future resting on the foundation of fear and resentment, which is not the firmest of foundations for a project that, in the view of its more fervent champions, aims to displace the national memories and identities of past and future. In conversations with thoughtful Europeans, the suggestion that the EU may be consigned to the dustbin of history in ten or fifteen years meets with dutiful protests but not with incredulity.

Even the economic benefits are cast into doubt as major players such as France and Germany fear the encroachment of "neoliberalism," by which they mean the market economy. The May referendum in France was, in the final analysis, a vote against change. Societies with double-digit unemployment that wrap the entire population in a welfare net to protect against life's risks and that massively subsidize economic inefficiencies do not have a bright future. Especially is this true when the population is rapidly aging. The triumph of what we might call "presentism," in the demographic catastrophe resulting from the continent-wide decision not to have babies, is the grim capstone of a structural turn against hope.

The triumph of presentism is not yet complete, and countries such as Poland evidence a measure of reluctance about contracepting and aborting their future, but the generalization holds that Europe is a dying continent. As though that were not sobering enough, it is exacerbated—in England, Germany, and, especially, France—by the presence of a large, rapidly growing, and mainly unassimilated population of Muslims, who have turned major cities into both the base and target of terrorism. The prospect of Europe becoming "Eurabia" is painfully clarified with each exploding bomb. Europeans have traditionally excoriated America for its troubled race relations. That criticism is no longer heard. In the American race riots of the 1960s and 1970s, angry young blacks played at revolution by burning down their own neighborhoods. Much more in deadly earnest are Muslims who dream of heavenly reward in lethally striking at the power and population

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centers of the infidels. Whether states respond with appeasement or with repression, or, as is likely, with a mix of both, may tell us more about the future of Europe than any blueprints issued from Brussels.

Little wonder that Poland, the preeminent representative of Rumsfeld's new Europe, is deeply ambivalent about the New Europe on offer from the old Europe. While almost all Poles admired and loved John Paul II, not all share his understanding of memory and identity that joins Poland to nothing less than salvation history. In that last book, he suggests, in a way that eludes sure understanding, that the election of a Polish pope was also the election of Poland. John Paul supported the unification of Europe, perhaps because in that process Poland could be the catalyst for restoring the memory and identity of Christian Europe.

One can almost hear him saying to his beloved Poland that it should "be not afraid" to enter upon the risks of the European project in the confidence that universality need not be the enemy of particularity—indeed, that the only universal to be trusted is the universal that emerges from and fulfills the genius of the particular. Conversely, the strength of memory and identity is tested by whether it provides a firm foundation for greater unity.

For John Paul, that firm foundation can be, ultimately, nothing less than allegiance to Jesus Christ and the culture formed by that allegiance. After all the considerations economic, political, and legal are duly weighed, the great question about Poland and European unification is whether there is an openness to the oft-repeated invitation of John Paul the Great, "Open the door to Christ!" At present, Brussels is most decidedly deaf to that invitation. If Poland simply goes along with the EU, if Poland does not persist in being Poland, it seems likely that Europe will have definitively declined an invitation to a different and more promising future.

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Looking Down

There is a mute abandon in the prim
And music in the silence of relief.
There is refreshment in the grey and grim
And peace in the unravelling of grief.
There comes an appetite before a feast
That some would label hunger out of fear,
But laughter, too, sleeps half the day at least,
And trees are gladly leafless half the year.
You ask why poets pick depression's bones
When lilacs beckon to be picked instead;
Why downcast choirs moan of mud and stones
When half the heavens shimmer overhead.
There lives some voice within us that seems made
To praise the sun by singing of its shade.

Daniel Waters

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The Shame of Darfur

Allen D. Hertzke

In April 2005, a striking celebration occurred in Washington to mark the signing of a peace accord between rebel groups of southern Sudan and the Islamist regime in Khartoum, ending Africa's longest and bloodiest civil war. In a packed room in the Longworth House Office Building, Sudanese exiles mingled with the American officials and religious leaders whose efforts helped halt Sudan's two-decade genocidal war against its non-Muslim population.

The event marked a triumph for both the Bush administration and the faith-based human-rights movement that has burst on the American foreign-policy scene in recent years. But the triumph was muted, for the Sudanese government in Khartoum has now turned its attention from the southern part of the country to the western, undertaking massive ethnic cleansing in the region known as Darfur. And so far, neither America's religious community nor its government has acted with the same vigor in addressing the crisis.

Indeed, the administration's mixed signals, alternately condemning and lauding the regime, have done little to rein in the Janjaweed marauders who keep the Darfur people from leaving fetid camps to plant crops and rebuild their shattered villages. And one reason the administration has not acted more forcefully is that the potent Christian groups involved in foreign affairs—those who anchored the religious coalition that compelled results in southern Sudan with unity and toughness—have been fragmented in their response to Darfur. This fact tarnishes the achievement in the south, and the stain will fall most heavily on the evangelical world. Born-again Christians in America, it will be said, care more about the deaths of their fellow believers in the south than about the deaths of Muslims in the west.

Given its special access to the White House and its grassroots muscle, the evangelical community remains uniquely situated to mobilize against what President Bush himself has described as "genocide in Darfur." As one insider explained, "If evangelicals are not prioritizing it, then the administration will not prioritize it." But the nation's evangelicals *should* prioritize it. Even without sending American troops to the region, forceful and moral options remain. The administration can stop sending mixed messages, mount a determined effort to expand and empower African Union forces, add U.S. logistical support, secure more aid, and massively increase diplomatic and economic pressure.

And to make all this happen—to halt the rape and murder of Darfur—the vital element is action from the American religious community.

Initially animated by concern for the persecution of Christians around the world, American religious activism blossomed into a wider quest to promote human rights through the machinery of American foreign policy. From the mid-1990s on, this faith-based movement of unlikely allies—from liberal Jewish groups to conservative evangelical churches—successfully pressed a succession of congressional initiatives, pouring new energy into a cause often trumped by economic and strategic calculations.

This activism was rooted in the tectonic shift of the world's Christian population to the developing world, where it often exists in poverty, violence, exploitation, and persecution. Through the expansion of global communication and booming religious networks, American Christians, especially evangelicals, filled a huge void in human-rights advocacy, raising issues previously slighted by secular groups, the mainstream press, and the foreign-policy establishment.

Nowhere was this more evident than in the campaign to end the civil war in southern Sudan. In a certain way, it was natural for American Christians to identify with the African people of Sudan, where Christianity traces its roots from the first centuries of the early Church. The northern part of the country, which contains the capital of Khartoum, is home to an Arabic-

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speaking Muslim population. The south and the Nuba mountains are populated by various African peoples, mostly a mix of Christians and traditional animist practitioners. The western province of Darfur represents another tradition, that of African tribes who adhere to the distinctive Sufi version of Islam.

The country has seen more than its share of bloody conflicts, but the worst in recent years arose from Islamist militancy, brought to Sudan by students in the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s. Represented by the National Islamic Front, the movement was never popular with the majority of Sudanese Muslims, but it gained influence through tight organization, intimidation, and violence. Despotic but vulnerable regimes found it convenient to accede to militant demands for the implementation of strict *shari'a* as a way to buy support.

In the wake of the Iranian revolution, such demands intensified, leading the Khartoum government to promulgate a radical series of *shari'a* laws in 1983. Non-Muslims in the south rebelled, coalescing in several groups, the most prominent being the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). Hopes for settlement were raised in 1989 when a newly elected government was scheduled to grant greater autonomy to the south. Those hopes were dashed when General Umar al-Bashir seized power in a coup, forging an alliance with the National Islamic Front to unite the country under the Islamist banner.

Though the world hardly noticed, this regime joined Iran and later Afghanistan as the only countries to rule by the Islamist vision. As Arab human-rights activist Hamouda Fathelrahman Bella notes, this coup "brought a regime unparalleled in modern Sudanese history," a harsh and "reactionary religious state in a multireligious, multiracial, and multilingual country." Public floggings and amputations came to Khartoum's stadium; women's freedom was severely curtailed; independent sectors of society were crushed; and thousands of people suspected of insufficient loyalty were detained, many tortured or executed.

The regime's attempt to Islamicize an unwilling people was especially brutal. Viewing the southerners as infidels, the regime issued a fatwa in 1993 declaring a jihad against non-Muslims and justifying mass killing or enslavement as means of bringing the region into the *dar al-Islam* (the "realm of Islam"). As Bella reports, the fatwa also classified Muslims who doubted the "Islamic justification of jihad" as hypocrites and apostates, which later rationalized the regime's onslaught in Darfur.

By employing scorched-earth policies that manufactured famine and then denying United Nations relief access, the regime decimated the southern population. Over its twenty-year span, the conflict claimed perhaps two million African lives—more fatalities than the conflicts in Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Rwanda put together—and displaced some four million people. Beyond targeting animists and Muslims in the south who resisted its fundamentalism, the regime literally attempted to wipe out Christianity. For a long while this genocidal dimension was scarcely noted by the press, but it was picked up in western religious circles, especially among Christian solidarity activists who mounted a campaign like the anti-apartheid struggle, complete with grassroots mobilization, protests, arrests, divestment pressure, and legislative sanctions.

That such a domestic movement could shape the destiny of a people far from home illustrates the remarkable clout of aroused religious constituencies and suggests their potential impact on Darfur. The plight of the southern Sudanese would have remained in the backwater of American concern had not the faith-based movement and its allies picked up the cause. Consider the case of John Eibner, an American leader of the Swiss-based Christian Solidarity International. Invited in 1992 by the New Sudan Council of Churches to investigate atrocities and slave raids in the region, he began redemption efforts in 1995. Raising money in the West and operating through local contacts, Eibner traveled frequently to Sudan, enduring harsh war-zone conditions. He redeemed thousands of Sudanese slaves, and evocative photographs of these transactions circulated widely. Charles Jacobs, head of the American Anti-Slavery Group, says that Eibner makes him think of the Jewish legend of a few "undiscovered holy men who hold up the world."

Jacobs, who is Jewish, came to the movement out of outrage that other human-rights organizations were ignoring slavery in North Africa. By sponsoring ex-slaves to tell their stories, Jacobs helped personalize the Sudan cause, providing the pictures and creating new activists. The slave issue also drew the African-American community into coalition with conservative evangelicals. Black preachers with huge congregations and broadcast ministries, such as T.D. Jakes and Chuck Singleton, mobilized their followers and prodded others, such as the NAACP and the Congressional Black Caucus, to join the cause.

While the slave issue acted as a magnet for African-Americans, the specter of genocide resonated in Jewish circles. Spurred by reports from Sudan, the Holocaust Memorial Museum issued an unprecedented "genocide warning" for Sudan early in 2001. Jerry Fowler, director of the Committee of Conscience for the Museum, followed up by developing a powerful exhibition of the atrocities committed by the regime. This meshed with other initiatives, such as the distribution by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations of a message about

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Sudan to synagogues throughout America for use in Passover Seders. When President Bush met with Jewish leaders in April 2001, he was admonished to do something about Sudan's crimes against humanity. A month later, before the American Jewish Committee, he chose to address Sudan in a hard-hitting speech, in which he accused Sudan of "crimes so monstrous that the American conscience had to assert itself."

But evangelical Christians remained the central grassroots force in the movement. Catholic and Anglican bishops from Sudan found their most attentive audiences through evangelical church networks. And because the UN relief program often failed to deliver aid to areas of greatest need, Christian groups such as Samaritan's Purse moved with considerable daring to meet the challenge, violating Sudanese airspace and avoiding military patrols to bring tangible help to suffering people in southern Sudan and the Nuba mountains. For a growing number of evangelical activists, traveling into war-torn areas of Sudan became a crucial sign of discipleship. They witnessed attacks, viewed scorched villages and mutilated bodies, and dodged enemy fire as they delivered relief supplies in unsecured areas. Their example prompted Congress to appropriate more money for American relief to be delivered outside of Khartoum's control. In turn, President Bush's relief team worked to ensure that more aid was actually delivered to people in the war zone.

From the late 1990s onward such evangelical luminaries as Franklin Graham of Samaritan's Purse, Charles Colson of Prison Fellowship, and Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention wrote and spoke often about the crisis in Sudan. The Southern Baptist Convention overwhelmingly passed a resolution condemning the regime in Khartoum for its genocide and calling for direct aid to the victims. *Christianity Today* and *World* magazines featured frequent Sudanese stories. Evangelical musicians produced benefit albums and concerts with Sudanese themes. A testament to the power of evangelical networks was a 2002 national survey of evangelical elites that found some 70 percent had absorbed a great deal of information about Sudan, with 40 percent contributing to an organization working there. Members of Congress reported striking interest in Sudan among their constituents.

One center of mobilization on southern Sudan was Midland, Texas, hometown of George W. and Laura Bush. Spearheading the effort there was Deborah Fikes, leader of the Midland Ministerial Alliance. An ardent evangelical, she worked with her husband to create an organization to support the ministry of sister churches in Sudan. As friends of the president, Fikes and her associates understood their special leverage, which they exercised judiciously. When Bush officials offered conciliatory messages about Sudan's cooperation in the war on terror after the attacks of September 11, the alliance sent a strong letter to the president. Stating that they would have to "stand with our brothers and sisters in Sudan, however God leads us," the group conveyed to White House officials that, at some point, the president's Midland friends might be compelled to take actions that could embarrass him.

Through billions of dollars of international investment, Sudan's oil reserves, most located in the south, began generating revenue in the late 1990s. This enabled Khartoum to buy advanced weaponry and led to ethnic cleansing in areas surrounding oil fields. Faced with the prospect that oil was "fueling genocide," activists mounted a divestment campaign against oil companies doing business in Sudan, particularly the Canadian oil company Talisman. Letters to fund managers went out from the movement's amalgam of Christian solidarity groups, Jewish leaders, and black pastors. The campaign was devastating as it "ran the tables" on major fund managers from Canada and the United States, resulting in a plummeting of Talisman value.

Activists also learned that China National Petroleum Company planned to raise some $10 billion from Wall Street, much of it for oil investment in Sudan. Articles blossomed in evangelical publications and advocacy outlets about the threat of this massive infusion of capital, letters went out to large investors, and sympathetic political leaders weighed in with charges that this stock offering would be "blood money" for Sudan's attempt to eradicate a people. The Chinese company raised only $3 billion of its $10 billion goal, a "$7 billion haircut" that sent shock waves through the investment community and must have sobered the Khartoum regime.

Simultaneously other activists pressed for congressional legislation. Michael Horowitz, an ex-Reagan official and catalyst for anti-persecution legislation, took from the statute books the apartheid bill Congress passed to deal with South Africa and got it inserted in House legislation on religious persecution. Though that provision was stricken from the final legislation, it represented the first iteration of what later became the Sudan Peace Act, sponsored by Senator Sam Brownback and Congressmen Frank Wolf and Chris Smith.

The House version of the Sudan Peace Act, passed in the summer of 2001, suggested the boldness of the interfaith movement. Based on the idea that the way to get Khartoum's attention was to curtail its oil revenues, the bill would have denied access to U.S. capital markets for companies doing business in Sudan. This caused apoplexy in the investment community and suggested the extent to which religious conservatives were willing to break with the business wing of the Republican party.

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Though the outright ban seemed to go too far, the coalition did secure compromise language that provided $300 million in aid for southern Sudan and authorized the president to deny oil revenue to the regime if it failed to negotiate for peace in a timely manner.

The passage of the Sudan Peace Act represented a major triumph of the movement, producing a Hollywood-like bill-signing ceremony in the Roosevelt Room at the White House on October 21, 2002. Though scantily reported by the press, word of the signing went forth from the religious presses and advocacy e-mail, buoying confidence for the inevitable battles to come.

Following the bill signing, activists continued to pounce whenever they felt that administration officials were soft-peddling Khartoum's human-rights record. The relentless pressure brought by the Sudan coalition on the Bush Administration and Khartoum eventually produced a stunning result: the peace treaty granting power-sharing with the rebels, autonomy for the south, and a new constitution. This remarkable achievement by "idealistic" religionists effectively checked the regime's goal of spreading its radical version of Islam deeper into Africa, which better served America's national security than the hands-off approach backed by the nation's foreign-policy realists.

Unfortunately, the very triumph in the south sparked the rebellion in the west. Thus the crisis of Darfur provides vivid evidence of the assertion of Muslim scholar Bassam Tibi that, whenever militant Islamists cannot achieve their goals or govern effectively, they always spread disorder. The Africans in Darfur, though Muslim, had long chafed under the neglect or discrimination by the Arab-dominated government in Khartoum, and they competed with nomadic Arabs of the region for land and water. As Sufis, they were also viewed as apostates by the National Islamic Front, and because they resisted its extreme interpretation of *shari'a*, they represented a threat to the regime.

This common resistance tied together the conflicts in southern Sudan and Darfur. When the southern peace process showed signs of providing the south with real autonomy by the spring of 2003, Darfur's rebels seized the opportunity to achieve a similar result and attacked garrisons of the government. Khartoum responded by pursuing yet another genocidal policy.

The calculated savagery of Khartoum's campaign has been stunning. As Nicholas Kristof of the *New York Times* reported in February, a document seized by the African Union from a Janjaweed official outlined in chilling detail official government policy. Demanding "execution of all directives from the president of the Republic," it called upon commanders to "change the demography of Darfur and make it devoid of African tribes." Dated August 2004, the document encouraged "killing, burning villages and farms, terrorizing people, confiscating property from members of African tribes and forcing them from Darfur."

Terribly effective, this strategy resulted in near-total ethnic cleansing in the areas in which it occurred, leaving over two and a half million people bereft of sustenance and vulnerable to continuing attacks, with the lives of even more at risk. The only reason violence has abated recently, as noted by Andrew Natsios, head of the U.S. Agency for International Development, is that "there are not many villages left to burn down and destroy."

The systematic nature of this campaign has been confirmed by eyewitness accounts. Brian Seidle, a former U.S. Marine captain working with the African Union, documented the onslaught from September 2004 until February 2005. Before an attack, the authorities would shut down cell-phone systems to prevent villages from warning each other. Next, aircraft would fly reconnaissance as helicopter gunships fired anti-personnel rockets. Then would come the proxy militias, the Janjaweed, killing, raping, burning, poisoning wells, and looting. As Seidle said in his testimony to Congress, "Every day we saw villages of up to 20,000 inhabitants burned to the ground with nothing left but ash frames. . . . We witnessed scores of dead bodies providing evidence of torture—arms bound, ears cut off, eyes plucked, males castrated and left to bleed to death, children beaten to a pulp, people locked in their huts before being burned alive, and apparent executions."

The actual number of the dead is impossible to calculate because so many of the internally displaced people forage the countryside or huddle in remote camps inside Sudan, where they die of disease, exposure, and malnutrition. Some estimates put the rising death toll as high as four hundred thousand as of the summer of 2005. Lack of security has kept farmers from returning to their fields, and that, combined with wider disruptions of the war and drought, contributes to an ongoing food crisis. Meanwhile, Janjaweed militias continue marauding and obstructing relief efforts. To terrorize people in the squatters' camps and remind them they do not belong in Darfur, the Janjaweed employ systematic rape, preying on women when they venture out to forage for food or firewood. Though the government of Sudan disavows involvement in atrocities, it has taken no action against the militias. Musa Hilal, one of the most ruthless Janjaweed commanders, parades himself regularly in Khartoum.

The initial international response to these "crimes against humanity" was anemic, and later action dilatory.

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From the beginning of the crisis onward, the United Nations failed at critical junctures to act against the regime, while the Chinese poured in oil investment, the Russians provided weapons, the European countries expanded trade, the Arab League offered solidarity, and African nations even helped elect Sudan to the UN Human Rights Commission.

Though belatedly, the United States has done the most to respond to the catastrophe, providing the lion's share of humanitarian aid, securing corridors, declaring the atrocities genocidal, and pressing (though mostly unsuccessfully) for tough UN action against the regime. But the Bush Administration has also lauded Sudan's cooperation in the war on terror and allowed the CIA to fly Sudan's intelligence chief, Salah Abdallah Gosh, an architect of the Darfur atrocity, to Washington for consultation. Concerned that further sanctions on Sudan might upset the southern peace process, it also got the House to scotch tough "Darfur accountability" legislation passed by the Senate in April. To date the administration has not mounted a broad strategy to protect civilians and enable them to reconstruct their villages.

This record led observers such as Nicholas Kristof to charge the Bush administration with doing "shamefully little" to end the Darfur crisis. Though perhaps unfair, this judgment reflects the fact that a fragmented religious response has failed to push the administration.

To be sure, some religious activism has taken up the cause of Darfur. A left-right "Sudan Campaign," led by Keith Roderick of Christian Solidarity International and with support from such activists as Nina Shea of Freedom House and Faith McDonnell of the Institute for Religion and Democracy, staged a 2004 summer of civil disobedience and arrests at the Sudanese embassy. It continues to mount a divestment effort against Sudan's oil industry. The Catholic bishops' conference has remonstrated with political leaders for action and appealed to parishes for relief support. Jewish groups anchor the "Save Darfur" organization, and black churches, which came only slowly to the campaign for the south, are beginning to generate serious grassroots activity for Darfur.

Evangelical leaders have also taken a number of independent initiatives. Richard Cizik of the National Association of Evangelicals orchestrated a hard-hitting letter to the Bush Administration in the spring of 2004 and joined this July with Jewish leaders for a prayer vigil on Darfur. Richard Land has personally pressed administration officials, while Charles Colson referred to Darfur in one of his *Breakpoint* radio commentaries. Leaders of such organizations as World Vision provide expertise on conditions in refugee camps and tough policy recommendations.

But these initiatives remain disparate, uncoordinated, and often unsustained. And some voices that championed southern Sudan have not spoken of Darfur with the same urgency. As one insider reported, during a high-level religious coalition meeting in Washington last year, activists were setting their human-rights agenda for the coming months and "nobody assigned Darfur, nobody put it on the agenda."

Ironically, the lack of unified vigor on Darfur may derive from the very process that secured the peace deal in the south. American Christians made a heavy emotional and tangible investment in the south. Because the southern peace process occurred just as the onslaught spread in Darfur, some religious leaders have been loath to protest against the regime out of concern for upsetting the pact between the government of Sudan and southern forces—and Khartoum cunningly stretched out the process while consolidating gains in the west.

Insiders also admit that there are tensions between long-standing religious advocates for southern Sudan and Darfur's activist newcomers. There is suspicion that some criticism of the Bush administration on Darfur is disingenuous, coming as it does from the likes of the National Council of Churches and the very leftist owners of Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream—and that if Bush acted militarily, he would be condemned for over-action just as he is now for under-action.

Then there is the poignant fact that attention to Darfur might divert resources desperately needed to shore up the peace in the south. Roger Winter, who directed all U.S. relief for the region and now serves as State Department Special Representative on Sudan, points to the inherently fungible nature of international money for Sudan. To a certain extent aid used for Darfur relief is not available for southern reconstruction and vice versa—a problem exacerbated as other countries renege on their pledges to both regions.

Another reason religious leaders have given for not challenging Sudan more fervently is the view that the best hope for Darfur is peace in the south—because that will lead to a transformation of the regime. New constitutional provisions, which went into effect on July 9, call for Sudan to be a "multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and, multi-religious society" in which "freedom of religion, belief and worship shall be guaranteed" and no one "coerced to embrace any faith or religion." For a radical Islamist government to make such concessions suggests, to some, the ascendancy of progressive new forces that should be welcomed.

This is the view of the Midland group, which hosted the Sudanese ambassador and his wife this past spring. Critics see this as a "troubling relationship," a manipulation of naive Christians by a skilled and charming

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diplomat. Aware of this criticism and acknowledging the potential value of other strategies, Fikes argues that nurturing this relationship enables them to exercise distinct leverage with the government and to hold it accountable for keeping religious freedom guarantees.

A related argument, advanced by Michael Horowitz, is that too much pressure on the Sudanese government during this delicate transition period may be counterproductive. There are "good guys" in Khartoum whom we should not undermine, and if "you are not going to have regime change," then "morally satisfying" gestures of condemnation do nothing. Moreover, in sensitive negotiations you do not say to your interlocutors "we'll put you in front of war-crimes tribunals." A related assessment is that Khartoum may not fully control elements of the military in Darfur, who are furious about the peace in the south. The recent death of SPLM leader John Garang, who was to have become vice president of a new unity government, makes the situation even more complex and delicate.

Horowitz also argues that the context is different with Darfur. American religious groups had leverage with Christian rebels in the south in a way they do not with Sufi rebels in the west. A letter from the Midland Ministerial Alliance to John Garang—cautioning him against making unrealistic demands—was crucial in ensuring that rebels took the remarkable deal offered by Khartoum. Because American Christians have no influence on the other side in Darfur, the argument goes, massive unilateral action against Khartoum may only embolden the rebels to step up attacks that provide the government with excuses for retaliation.

This sense that options are limited on Darfur has led some in the religious coalition to devote their energies to other issues they deem ripe for religious impact, particularly North Korea and sex trafficking. Other activists, however, see the potential for maintaining pressure on Khartoum to halt its atrocities in Darfur. Arguing that pressing on Darfur is "more likely to facilitate the peace process than inhibit it," Richard Land characterizes the regime as "a gangster cabal masquerading as a government" that respects only "force and the spine to use it."

Similarly, John Eibner sees the north-south deal as merely a tactical suspension of Khartoum's ambition to Islamize and Arabize Sudan. Thus a policy without threats, such as an oil or arms embargo, is unlikely to halt the genocide. About fears of upsetting the southern peace, "one cannot do a trade-off between genocide in Darfur and peace in southern Sudan." Roger Winter agrees, arguing that demanding accountability for those most responsible for the Darfur atrocities serves the cause of moderates in Khartoum. Similarly, there is no reason why the United States cannot simultaneously shore up the southern peace and pursue a tough policy on Darfur. As to the supposed inability of Khartoum authorities to rein in the Janjaweed, Eibner has heard the same argument about slaving in the south. Yet, as he notes, slave raids stopped abruptly when the government of Sudan became serious about peace negotiations.

These different assessments keep the religious community from presenting a unified front on Darfur, but they also encourage administrative inertia. "Timid people" at the State Department, Richard Land insists, "get vapors" at the "first mention of force." The only counterweight to "business as usual at Foggy Bottom," he contends, is constituency pressure. This assessment is confirmed by Samantha Power in her book on responses to genocides, *A Problem from Hell*. Explaining why America did not act against the Rwanda genocide, Clinton national security advisor Anthony Lake explained that "the phones weren't ringing on Rwanda."

Evangelical leaders bear a special responsibility to get the phones ringing on Darfur, because of their capacity to reach millions and their unique access to the president. Some in the mainstream press charge that because victims in Darfur are Muslims and not Christians, evangelicals have not responded with the same vigor. For certain sectarian groups, such as Voice of the Martyrs, there is probably some truth to this. Mailings from the organization continue to refer to the "jihad on the Christians of Southern Sudan," suggesting the difficulty of shifting attention to a Muslim population under siege.

A better explanation is the decentralized and entrepreneurial nature of the evangelical world, which makes coordination hard. Still, the uncoordinated effort on Darfur contrasts dramatically with what caught the attention of Congress and the administration on southern Sudan. And when appeals result in perfunctory responses, evangelicals have not demanded more.

Another influence is the recrudescence of the culture war. Gay marriage and the related issue of judicial appointments exploded onto the agenda, diverting attention from Darfur. Indeed, one prominent born-again leader admitted to me that "the timing" was not convenient for a full press on the international front. A related factor pertains to pietistic habits of the evangelical mind, as identified by Mark Noll, that result in an episodic and reactive public engagement. Certain prominent evangelical figures, such as Gary Bauer and James Dobson, who put their formidable networks in service of the cause in southern Sudan, are now largely silent on Darfur.

The challenge for the religious community and the U.S. government is to respond in a way commensurate with the crisis. To be sure, the situation in Darfur is com-

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plex and one cannot gainsay the possibility of unintended consequences. That said, the contours of possible American action to ameliorate the crisis are clear: We must provide more relief to save lives, get forces on the ground to provide security, and elevate the diplomatic stakes against Khartoum's depredations. All are within reach if the United States makes Darfur a command focus. The religious community has the capacity, and therefore the obligation, to help make that happen.

Most immediately we should address the humanitarian crisis. The UN World Food Program estimates that up to 3.5 million people face famine in Darfur this fall, yet donations have fallen far short of needs. Starvation is also occurring in parts of the south, because the international community has failed to deliver the assistance previously committed. Religious leaders, Eibner suggests, "should be urging the entire international community without delay" to get needed money for both regions. Churches can also support the work by designating special Sunday collections, as the U.S. Catholic Conference did last year. Especially effective might be a public effort by the evangelical elite to mobilize their formidable networks to avert famine throughout Sudan.

There is a massive need to rebuild the southern region's infrastructure and civil society. Though some organizations have moved in to do this, Eibner observes that the response has been paltry so far. Indeed, he notes not only the physical devastation of the region, but the spiritual hunger of people who wish to build institutions of a Christian culture but lack minimal tools. A strengthened southern society would be a leavening bulwark against renewed militant Islamist advances and provide hope for the protection of human rights. The president can play a pivotal role here, personally summoning the nation's charitable impulse on behalf of the victims in Sudan and averting painful tradeoffs between Darfur and the south by providing more robust aid and pressing other countries to ante up.

With respect to security, one argument for our inability to influence events in Darfur is that *everyone*—including the government in Khartoum—knows that America, while in Iraq, will not put another "Christian army" in the heart of another Muslim country, even for humanitarian intervention. But a consensus is emerging on what will provide a modicum of security: a dramatically expanded African Union force with U.S. logistical support and a mandate sufficient to deter attacks on civilians.

Up to now, deployment of African Union forces has been agonizingly slow, and there are no plans for expansion to the levels needed. From a force level of three thousand, the African Union contingent is slated to expand to some seven thousand this fall, but shortage of funds may prevent that. The International Crisis Group estimates a need of twelve to fifteen thousand troops.

In addition to more boots on the ground, the crisis group calls for an expanded mandate that allows African Union forces to take offensive measures against threats to civilians and humanitarian operations—together with enforcement of a ban on military flights and dramatically enhanced U.S. and NATO logistical support. These recommendations were echoed by a congressional work group looking at UN reform, co-chaired by Newt Gingrich and George Mitchell. As evidence of the effectiveness of even small numbers of African Union forces, Brian Steidle offered a dramatic example in testimony before Congress. After a devastating attack on a town of twenty thousand, a Sudanese general confided that his goal was "to continue clearing the route all the way to Khartoum." Remarkably, the union placed thirty-five soldiers in the next town, which was enough to deter government forces from attacking it. The union then deployed seventy soldiers in the previous town, which enabled some three thousand people to return to rebuild.

Achieving an adequate force level would require the president to bring huge diplomatic pressure on the African Union and our NATO allies, along with exercising leadership to obtain sufficient funding. But the president can do more. He can elevate the stakes for Khartoum by using the bully pulpit, inviting Darfur representatives to the White House and spelling out the steps his administration will take to end the tragedy. He can seriously upgrade the position of Roger Winter, a longstanding advocate for Sudan's vulnerable, by providing him the high-level White House access enjoyed by John Danforth, the previous special envoy, and ensuring full administration backing of his initiatives. The president can put together an international coalition of conscience to block arms and threaten Sudan's oil industry unless it provides lasting security guarantees to the Darfur people. He can ensure all agencies of the U.S. government send clear, tough messages to Khartoum—and one way to do that is by backing legislation for accountability in Darfur.

The religious community must do its part by keeping the tragedy foremost on the political agenda, as it did for the southern war. Though the Bush Administration did not always follow the specific wishes of activists on southern Sudan, it placed a priority on peace because the issue had politically mobilized a critical mass of the American Christian community. A kind of stewardship obligation, especially for evangelicals, involves doing the same on Darfur. Fulfilling that obligation can transform a potential stain of neglect into another human-rights triumph for people of faith. FT

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God & Bertie Wooster

Joseph Bottum

Suppose that words were all you had. Suppose the great edifice of Western civilization had collapsed around you—all its truths, all its certainties, all its aspirations smashed to meaningless shards. Suppose . . . oh, I don't know, suppose that it was 1919, and the First World War had just finished cracking Europe across its knee like a stick, and you were living in what the poet T.S. Eliot in one of his occasional sour moods called the Waste Land, and words were all you had: stray lines from lost poems, refrains from otherwise forgotten songs, tags from half-erased sermons—fragments, only fragments, to shore against your ruins. What would you do?

You could work yourself into a mad lather, I suppose, muttering as you trudge along the sidewalks and pinning passing strangers against the shop windows to explain that Friedrich Nietzsche had been right all along: The Christian social order has been a flop from the beginning, and the sooner we stamp out the last of it, the better. Then again, you could order in some whiskey and drink yourself into a stupor. There are dozens of ways, in fact, to deal with the situation, each as likely to be ineffective as the last. It's a problem knowing what to do when the end of the world knocks on the door one morning like an ancient Gaul with a toothache and a battle-axe.

But in those dark days of the twentieth century, in the middle of the apparent collapse of it all, there was at least one man who had the courage, the intelligence, and the sheer persevering goofiness simply to ignore the whole mess, frittering away his days by writing books like *Leave It to Psmith*, *Young Men in Spats*, and *My Man Jeeves*.

Pelham Grenville Wodehouse—"P.G. Wodehouse," as he signed his work; "Plum," as he was called by his friends—wrote more than fifty novels, over three hundred short stories, and some twenty-odd plays: a total of ninety-seven books before his death in 1975 at age ninety-three. And the curious thing is that not a single one of them mattered. Not a single one of them converted a soul, or turned a tide, or saved a battle, or carried a flag, or seized a day. He published several million words during his lifetime, and even amid the verbal bloat of our own hyperinflated times, it's hard to imagine a more pointless waste.

They were perfect words, of course. There's no getting around that. Take a sentence like "She looked as if she had been poured into her clothes and had forgotten to say 'when.'" Or "Into the face of the young man who sat on the terrace of the hotel at Cannes there had crept a look of furtive shame, the shifty, hangdog look which announces that an Englishman is about to talk French." Or "I don't owe a penny to a single soul—not counting tradesmen, of course." Or "If not actually disgruntled, he was far from being gruntled." Or "As for Gussie Fink-Nottle, many an experienced undertaker would have been deceived by his appearance and started embalming on sight."

P.G. Wodehouse tossed off such lines as though he'd gotten a discount from a cousin who dealt them wholesale. Diction, really, is the key. Wodehouse rarely wrote anything except light romantic comedy—in essence, novelized versions of old-fashioned Broadway shows: "musical comedy without music," as he once described it. And that's a genre of literature which doesn't carry the burden of civilization very far. Its shoulders, so to speak, are a little weak for the task. But within this minor, silk-suited genre, the twentieth century saw a writer with diction that belongs in the class of Shakespeare and very few others in the history of English literature.

There's something rather disturbing about this fact. I mean, Shakespeare clearly didn't mind dabbling in romantic comedy—try *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and

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Love's Labour's Lost—if he needed something quick with which to pay the bills. But on other days he'd try to work up plays with a little more meat on their bones. And Wodehouse, ah, well, Wodehouse never sought more than a story light enough on its feet to dance to the evanescent burble of his prose: "Though he scorned and loathed her, he was annoyed to discover that he loved her still. He would have liked to bounce a brick on Prudence Whittaker's head, and yet, at the same time, he would have liked—rather better, as a matter of fact—to crush her to him and cover her face with burning kisses. The whole situation was very complex."

Once you start quoting lines like this from Wodehouse, it's hard to stop. The prose is almost depressingly perfect—depressingly, that is, for all of us who realize we'll never match it in our own writing. "She's one of those soppy girls, riddled from head to foot with whimsy," his favorite character Bertie Wooster says of Madeline Bassett, one of the many girls he hopes never to have to marry. "She holds the view that the stars are God's daisy chain, that rabbits are gnomes in attendance on the Fairy Queen, and that every time a fairy blows its wee nose a baby is born, which, as we know, is not the case. She's a drooper."

That "as we know" is simply an untouchable moment of prose. Meanwhile, "The Duke of Dunstable had one-way pockets. He would walk ten miles in the snow to chisel an orphan out of tuppence." And "I turned to Aunt Agatha, whose demeanor was now rather like that of one who, picking daisies on the railway, has just caught the down express on the small of the back." And "He trusted neither of them as far as he could spit, and he was a poor spitter, lacking both distance and control." On, and on, and on the examples go, never a weak moment, never a lost sentence, never a word out of place—and never a one of those words mattering in the least, never a one of them aimed at any purpose but their own light comedy, never a one of them anything but wasted.

Except—well, except that maybe in the sheer insouciance of their failure to be important, they came to be very important indeed. Maybe P.G. Wodehouse matters precisely because he was willing not to matter. Maybe we should take seriously the fact that a major English literary talent of the twentieth century was content to use his perfect prose for no purpose greater than the construction of pleasant farces, gentle comedies, and the buzz of language as it passes through an Edwardian fantasy world of stern aunts, spineless noblemen, soppy girls, and young men in spats.

We enter here into deep waters, too deep a puddle for Wodehouse himself to stick in his toe. "The question of how authors come to write their books is generally one not easily answered," he once observed. "Milton, for instance, asked how he got the idea for *Paradise Lost*, would probably have replied with a vague 'Oh, I don't know, you know. These things sort of pop into your head, don't you know,' leaving the researcher very much where he was before."

Still, there was something in those ninety-seven books that the twentieth century needed. You can't say modern times lacked serious fiction, or biting satire, or experimental poetry. You can't say the world was short on big ideas, or intellectual politics, or what Friedrich Nietzsche called philosophizing with a hammer. But maybe we were a little deficient in laughter during the twentieth century. Maybe we still are, in the twenty-first.

The story "Jeeves Takes Charge" begins with Bertie Wooster engaged to Florence Craye, an intellectual young woman whose idea of preparing Bertie for marriage is to insist he read books with titles like *Types of Ethical Theory*. This isn't the simple young man's cup of tea, of course, but Bertie is besotted, for, "seen sideways," Florence is "most awfully good looking." And so, as in any such story, the vital job of Bertie's loyal valet, Jeeves, must be to ensure the inappropriate engagement is broken off. "It was her intention to start you almost immediately upon Nietzsche," the successful Jeeves explains at the story's end. "You would not like Nietzsche, sir. He is fundamentally unsound."

And, really, that's the point. Nietzsche is fundamentally unsound for a variety of reasons that will occur to the theologically minded. But here is another and possibly more telling proof of his unsoundness: Bertie Wooster, one of the great innocents in literature, wouldn't like at all to have to read him, no matter how alluring Florence Craye is in profile. The best answer to Friedrich Nietzsche we've managed yet to come up with is the prose of P.G. Wodehouse.

One could natter learnedly here about the role of joy in the thought of various Christian thinkers. After all, "laughter is the closest thing to the grace of God," as Karl Barth famously remarked. And in *Leisure: The Basis of Culture* (a book that T.S. Eliot, in one of his happier moods, praised highly), the Catholic philosopher Josef Pieper explained that leisure is "an attitude of contemplative 'celebration' which draws its vitality from affirmation," and "to celebrate means to proclaim, in a setting different from the ordinary everyday, our approval of the world as such."

As it happens, Bertie Wooster and the other young men of P.G. Wodehouse's world have little in their lives except leisure. They use it mostly in desperate pursuit, or desperate avoidance, of all the young women they meet—which is, one guesses, only incidentally what

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Pieper had in mind when he declared leisure the basis of culture; civilization can run only so far on light romantic comedy. But there is manifestly some kind of celebration going on in the prose of those characters' author, and the result is the grace of laughter for the reader. Something in Wodehouse's stories hints at what made David dance before the Ark for the God who gave joy to his youth. And something in his pages suggests "the living God, Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."

It's a little hard to say quite what that something is. Wodehouse may be our best answer to Nietzsche, but he isn't entirely clear on how *Young Men in Spats* trumps *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. But suppose that laughter offers blessed escape for a while from the terrible *mattering* that possessed modern times. Suppose that Christendom—the deep unity of Western culture through the years—survives best not when it is trying to respond to the relentless thud with which secular history marches, but when it dances a little. And suppose that God's grace doesn't dwell just in the tears we shed at the tragedy of the world, but also in the play of comedy. Wodehouse titled one of his best novels *Joy in the Morning*, after a passage in Psalm 30 that Jeeves quotes to Bertie Wooster: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." And it's true. Joy does come in the morning, and laughter from reading P.G. Wodehouse. That's a small grace, but a real one.

Never was there a man further from Wodehouse's characters than Wodehouse himself. (In the usual muddle of British orthography, his name is pronounced "wood-house," rather than "woad-house.") He made an enormous amount of money from his writing, averaging over $100,000 a year in the 1920s, for instance, when $100,000 a year was still $100,000 a year and then some. But he was, in person, a shy and unimpressive figure who dressed in worn clothes and was known among his acquaintances as one of the dullest conversationalists in captivity. All he did, in fact, was work, spending the mornings editing the previous day's writing and the afternoon penning new material. Flaubert talked grandly of being a slave to his art. Wodehouse actually lived it. "I haven't got any violent feelings about anything," he once told an interviewer. "I just love writing."

He was born in England in 1881, the son of a British colonial officer in Hong Kong, and burdened with family names he always hated. "I have my dark moods when they seem to me about as low as you can get," he later explained. "At the font I remember protesting vigorously when the clergyman uttered them, but he stuck to his point. 'Be that as it may,' he said firmly, having waited for a lull, 'I name thee Pelham Grenville.'" His mother carried the infant Pelham Grenville out to China to join his father but within a few years shipped him back to England with his older brothers to be cared for by an improbable succession of aunts. ("In this life," he would go on to write, "it is not aunts that matter, but the courage that one brings to them"—and add, "It is no use telling me that there are bad aunts and good aunts. At the core they are all alike. Sooner or later out pops the cloven hoof.")

School must have come as a relief, and he seems to have loved his education at Dulwich College. But his family lacked the money to send him on to Oxford and, instead, found him a job at age eighteen as a clerk at the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank in London. Advancement at a colonial bank generally required posting to the colonies, and Wodehouse was determined to find success as a writer quickly enough to avoid the trip to the Far East. After a rapid spate of magazine stories and poems and columns, his first book appeared in 1902, and by 1904 he had left the bank and established himself financially as a writer.

Regular trips to America soon followed (the money for pieces in American magazines was somewhat better, and the money for plays and musicals in America was astronomically better than British rates). In 1914, Wodehouse met and married Ethel Newton, a widow in New York. Ethel and Plum had a curious and not entirely explicable marriage, but without doubt she provided him what he needed, taking over all the practical concerns, leaving the writer free to do nothing but write.

And write he did, making so much money—from his books, scripts for Hollywood and Broadway, and articles in magazines such as *Vanity Fair*—that the American tax authorities and the British Inland Revenue united in one of their first joint projects, a trans-Atlantic cooperative effort to dig as much as possible out of Wodehouse's international royalties. That may have been what finally drove him abroad in 1934, when he and Ethel settled in France.

In retrospect, this proved not to be the ideal time for such a move. Five years later, Hitler's blitzkrieg swept through the area, picking up the British Wodehouse along the way—or, as he explained, "Young men, starting out in life, have often asked me, 'How can I become an internee?' Well, there are several methods. My own was to buy a villa in Le Touquet on the coast of France and stay there until the Germans came along. This is probably the best and simplest system. You buy the villa and the Germans do the rest."

Unfortunately, he offered that explanation on a shortwave broadcast to America sponsored by the Nazis. A clever German publicity agent, apparently

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realizing what a naïf they had captured, ordered Wodehouse transferred from the internment camp to a hotel in Berlin and talked him into making five comic presentations for his American fans in the days before the United States had entered the war. The reaction in London was volcanic, as the BBC and the *Daily Mirror* and even A.A. Milne spewed outrage at his apparent treason. It was the worst misstep of his career—but perhaps a predictable one, for he seemed to live only for his writing, and the England he created in his fiction was as imaginary a place as J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth or what Alice found through the looking glass. "How's the weather, Jeeves?" young Bertie Wooster had asked his valet almost twenty years before in Wodehouse's acknowledgement of the beginning of the First World War:

> "Exceptionally clement, sir."
> "Anything in the papers?"
> "Some slight friction threatening in the Balkans, sir. Otherwise, nothing."

Wodehouse was strongly advised not to return to England after Germany surrendered. "I made an ass of myself and must pay the penalty," he acknowledged in 1945. So he moved to New York instead, eventually settling on an estate on Long Island, where he continued to do little but write, until the British forgave him enough to award him a knighthood in 1975, two months before he died.

A number of writers known for their religious interests have praised Wodehouse. Hilaire Belloc, for instance, called him the "best writer of our time, the best living writer of English and the head of my profession." But I have always thought they did so more in their capacity as writers than in their capacity as religious thinkers. When professional scribblers run their eyes over a page of P.G. Wodehouse, they see just how good he is: The more you know about how prose gets created, the more he seems unmatchable.

Evelyn Waugh, however, once tried to reach for something more, offering an explicitly religious reading of the stories about Bertie and Jeeves: "For Mr. Wodehouse," he claimed, "there has been no Fall of Man; no 'aboriginal calamity.' His characters have never tasted the forbidden fruit. They are still in Eden."

That sounds, at first hearing, like so much blather. The Wodehousian characters are Edenic only if all light comedies, all young romances, and all Broadway farces—if all stories with happy endings, for that matter—take place sometime before the Serpent makes his entrance in the Book of Genesis. P.G. Wodehouse hardly wrote more than one story in all his books. The plots could be fiendishly complicated, but they typically boil down to: Boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gains girl again. As it happens, a Bertie Wooster story often stands the pattern on its head—boy is happily free, boy mutton-headedly gets entangled with a beautiful but disastrous girl, boy manages at last to wriggle free:

> Aunt Dahlia, describing this young blister as a one-girl beauty chorus, had called her shots perfectly correctly. Her outer crust was indeed of a nature to cause those beholding it to rock back on their heels with a startled whistle. But while equipped with eyes like twin stars, hair ruddier than the cherry, oomph, *espièglerie* and all the fixings, this B. Wickham had also the disposition and general outlook on life of a ticking bomb. In her society you always had the uneasy feeling that something was likely to go off at any moment with a pop. You never knew what she was going to do next or into what murky depths of soup she would carelessly plunge you.
>
> "Miss Wickham, sir," Jeeves had once said to me warningly at the time when the fever was at its height, "lacks seriousness. She is volatile and frivolous. I would always hesitate to recommend a young lady with quite such a vivid shade of red hair."
>
> His judgment was sound. I have already mentioned how with her subtle wiles this girl induced me to sneak into Sir Roderick Glossop's sleeping apartment and apply the darning needle to his hot-water bottle—and that was comparatively mild going for her. In a word, Roberta, daughter of Lady Wickham of Skeldings Hall, Herts, and the late Sir Cuthbert, was pure dynamite, and better kept at a distance by all those who aimed at leading a peaceful life. The prospect of being immured with her in the same house, with all the facilities a country house affords an enterprising girl for landing her nearest and dearest in the mulligatawny, made me singularly dubious about the shape of things to come.

But even a Bertie and Jeeves story is still a farce—a musical without the music—and it doesn't escape the angel with the flaming sword who blocks the return to Eden.

And yet, on second thought, there may actually be a sort of fall that Wodehouse's characters never suffer. It's not the "aboriginal calamity" of Adam and Eve; not even that amiable and bone-headed peer, Lord Emsworth, the centerpiece of Wodehouse's many stories set in and around Blandings Castle, entirely dodges original sin. Nonetheless, the characters do somehow manage to sidestep rather neat-

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ly most of the unpleasantness of the twentieth century. If Bertie Wooster had ever really existed, he would (as George Orwell once pointed out) have died at the Battle of the Somme in 1916 along with most of the rest of his Edwardian class. Of course, Bertie Wooster didn't really exist, and the world he inhabits bore little contact with English reality before World War I and even less contact with reality as the years went on.

Even the occasional topical reference—as in the title of the 1965 story "Bingo Bans the Bomb"—doesn't move P.G. Wodehouse's characters any closer to the real world, for they live, finally, only in a magical country of linguistic construction. They buzz and prattle, rattle and hum, for talk is their life and their meaning.

"It is pretty generally recognized in the circles in which he moves that Bertram Wooster is not a man who lightly throws in the towel and admits defeat," Wodehouse begins a typical run of Bertie's first-person narration. "Beneath the thingummies of what-d'you-call-it, his head, wind and weather permitting, is as a rule bloody but unbowed, and if the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune want to crush his proud spirit, they have to pull their socks up and make a special effort."

You can diagram this, if you absolutely have to, as the critic Richard Usborne once noted. A metaphor from boxing slides into a deliberately mangled quotation from W.E. Henley's late-Victorian poem "Invictus"—into which mangle are inserted not just one but two meaningless verbal inflators: "wind and weather permitting," and "as a rule." That somehow leads to a slightly less garbled dribble from *Hamlet*, the high tone of which is immediately deflated with the slang of "pull their socks up."

But even pulling the writing apart this way doesn't fully reveal what Wodehouse is doing in his prose. You'll sometimes see him praised for the wide range of his literary references. Don't believe it. A volley here and there at something highbrow is taken by Jeeves for comic effect, but not often. Wodehouse's references—particularly in the first-person with which Bertie Wooster narrates his stories—are almost entirely from the Edwardian schoolboy canon: the Bible and Shakespeare, the kind of Anglican hymn heard in British public schools, Victorian parlor poetry, the Bible and Shakespeare again, a few popular songs from the 1880s, Kipling, and the Bible and Shakespeare once again:

> From down the road came the sound of voices, and a mere instant was enough to tell us that it was Mrs. Bingo and the Pyke talking things over. I had never listened in on a real, genuine female row before, and I'm bound to say it was pretty impressive. During my absence, matters appeared to have developed on rather a specious scale. They had reached the stage now where the combatants had begun to dig into the past and rake up old scores. Mrs. Bingo was saying that the Pyke would never have got into the hockey team at St. Adela's if she hadn't flattered and fawned upon the captain in a way that it made Mrs. Bingo, even after all these years, sick to think of. The Pyke replied that she had refrained from mentioning it until now, having always felt it better to let bygones be bygones, but that if Mrs. Bingo supposed her to be unaware that Mrs. Bingo had won the Scripture prize by taking a list of the Kings of Judah into the examination room, tucked into her middy-blouse, Mrs. Bingo was vastly mistaken.

Twentieth-century schooling let much of this once-shared set of references fall away, which is why Wodehouse's stories sometimes seem to readers more learned than they actually are.

Open references to religion are relatively rare. The fathers of two characters once came to blows in the bar of their club over the apostolic claims of the Abyssinian Church, but, as the narrator remarks, the wonder wasn't that they fought but that either of them had ever heard of the Abyssinian Church. There are a few classic Bertie-and-Jeeves stories that rely on religious situations, particularly "The Great Sermon Handicap." And then there are the tales told by Mr. Mulliner (the best may be "Buck-U-Uppo") about the rise of his nephew Augustine, a delicate, pale, and milktoasty cleric, through the hierarchy of the Anglican Church as it squabbles about orphreys and chasubles.

But Wodehouse's stories are never openly religious. They exist in an Edwardian fantasy world that simply assumes the presence of the clergy and the Church. The overall aim of his books is, more than anything else, to avoid as much as possible the whole of the twentieth century—its fall, its forgetfulness, its horror, its waste land. Inside his ninety-seven volumes, Europe's ancient Christian culture hasn't collapsed into meaninglessness, leaving us only fragments to shore against our ruins.

Take a look at such perfect stories as "Jeeves and the Old School Chum," or "Uncle Fred Flits By," or "Lord Emsworth and the Girlfriend." Words were all that P.G. Wodehouse had, and in one sense he squandered them on nothing more than light comedy. In another sense, he found with all his writing something worth more than words can say: a small, happy spot kept bright in a world that seemed only to be darkening around it. Surely that's enough for one man. FT

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The Lively God of Robert Jenson

David B. Hart

A year ago, I was interviewed by a small theological journal concerning a book of mine that had appeared a few months earlier. Near the end of the conversation, my interlocutor (a young and obviously intelligent divinity student) asked me if there was any modern American theologian whose thinking I thought especially fascinating, to which I answered Robert Jenson; he then asked if there was any American theologian with whose thought I myself found it especially profitable to struggle, to which I again answered, without a moment's hesitation, Robert Jenson. At this, my interviewer smiled abashedly and admitted that he had never read any of Jenson's work. I doubt the severest critic could have found fault with my extravagant show of alarm: How very extraordinary it was, I told him, that an American graduate student of systematic theology should be unacquainted with "our" systematic theologian, and what dereliction it suggested on the part of his teachers, and what a very great pity it all seemed . . . (and so on and so on, with many a rueful shake of the head).

This, of course, is a thoroughly boring anecdote; I relate it, however, because this small incident soon caused me to begin reflecting upon the curious neglect America's perhaps most creative systematic theologian has suffered not only among reasonably theologically literate American Christians, but in the academic world. I do not mean to suggest that Jenson is what one would call an obscure figure: Among those who do genuinely care about systematic theology in this country, his work is known and esteemed (indeed, by many, revered), and the appearance a few years ago of his *Systematic Theology* confirmed his stature not only as an exciting thinker—more theoretically audacious than almost all of his contemporaries—but one whose achievement is indisputably enormous. Still, as of yet (and he is over seventy years old), his thought is too little taught and too little studied; too few dissertations engage his ideas; not nearly enough attention is paid to his contributions to modern dogmatics; and too little pride is taken in the dignity his work lends to American theology. Why, I wonder, should this be so?

One reason, I suspect, is precisely that Jenson is an American (to be exact, a Minnesota Lutheran of Norwegian extraction, and of the "high church" variety). It is a prejudice widely held—but by no people more fervently than by Americans themselves—that it is not our calling as a nation to indulge in "primary discourse." It is all well and good for an American theologian to write at length about (for instance) what German theologians might have to say about the Trinity, but it is something altogether different for him to write too boldly about the Trinity as such. We would not usually—as a rule—presume. Another reason, perhaps, is Jenson's inveterate and perverse refusal to be dull. His books are not buttressed (as we know such things should be) by long, ponderous, Teutonic prolegomena on method or on critical history or on the *status quaestionis*; his scholarly apparatus rarely exceed what is necessary to support his assertions and are almost ascetically devoid of needless displays of exhaustive erudition; his method and peculiar concerns are typically disclosed in the act of theology itself, on the wing, and he tends to say what he wishes to say once only, and as concisely as he can.

Of course, this last characteristic can occasionally prove daunting. At its most idiosyncratic, Jenson's

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prose has about it at once a spare tautness and a condensed energy that are almost palpable; one sometimes has the premonition that if certain of his sentences are handled too casually they might detonate. Whether his style is the result of a conscious method, or merely of the legendarily laconic reserve of the Scandinavian upper Midwest translated through a rigorous speculative intelligence, it occasionally produces formulations of a positively oracular terseness. At times, one is conscious of the aphoristic precision of one of his assertions, but not necessarily of its meaning. To take a moderately opaque example of his style, more or less at random:

> In Trinitarian theology "the Word" stands for God's identifying communication of himself, and is at once the content of God's self-conception that "I am the one who . . ." and the act of sharing that conception. If we may formulate a content of the unitary "Word of the Lord" that "came" to Israel by her prophets and moved her history, it can only be, "I am JHWH your God, who. . . . Therefore you shall . . ." This word, as actually spoken, is precisely the Trinitarian Logos.

This is not by any means unintelligible, nor (whatever one thinks of it) especially resistant to paraphrase; but neither is it making any great effort to do at least as much work as it demands of the reader. And sometimes Jenson is clearly more concerned for the force of a phrase than for its felicity—"God is a great *fugue*," for instance (the poetry lies here in the idea, I think it safe to say, rather than in the words). At such junctures, his prose does not exactly "sing." Still, for the most part, Jenson is a compelling writer, altogether more precise than one has a right to expect in regard to matters as subtle and intricate as those he chooses to address, with something of the dramatist's flair for keeping the action moving. And, as a result, it is difficult to resist the power of the theological story he tells.

Perhaps the simplest thing one might say about Jenson's theology is that it is a theology of the *living* God. To put the matter thus, however, scarcely conveys any inkling of the vibrancy of Jenson's sense of God's liveliness, or of the force with which that sense has impressed itself upon—and occupies every page of—Jenson's theology: There is nothing in the triune God, one might better say, that is not an infinite act of life—and that life an act of boundless love. God *is* the movement of the Father's love for the Son, and the Son's love for the Father, and their inexhaustible life together in the endless love of the Spirit; and within that movement is contained all beauty, glory, splendor, joy, and future. As Jenson insists upon saying, God is an event—the event, to be precise, of Christ in its eternal fullness—and this event has a real and concrete history. To understand what this means, however, one must understand how Jenson's thought stands in relation to the Christian dogmatic tradition as a whole.

Most Christians, no matter how orthodox or devout they may be, have (through no fault of their own) little notion of how the doctrine of the Trinity took shape, or why it assumed the form it did. Few, certainly, take an interest in the doctrinal disputes of the Church's early centuries, and many harbor at best some vague conception of the Christian doctrine of God that, if more closely examined, turns out to be either some version of one of the heresies rejected by the councils of the ancient Church—"tritheism," "adoptionism," "modalism," even "Arianism"—or a bland ethical Unitarianism bound only tenuously to the historical career of Jesus of Nazareth. Many, I suspect, think of the doctrine of the Trinity (when they have occasion to think of it at all) either as a mere revealed "fact" susceptible of no rational investigation or as something rather arbitrary and historically fortuitous, to be embraced *ex convenientia* but accorded little serious reflection. In fact, however, the orthodox articulation of Trinitarian theology came at the end not only of many decades of extremely complicated theological dispute, but also of centuries of meditation upon the meaning of the scriptural account of Christ's life, death, resurrection, and continued presence to the Church in the Holy Spirit.

At the beginning of the fourth century, there were many models by which Christian theologians attempted to grasp the nature of the interrelations of Father, Son, and Spirit, and to determine to which of the three Persons—and in what manner—it was correct to apply the name "God." Scripture made it impossible, of course, to deny Christ at least some ascription of divinity, and equally difficult to reject the divinity of the Spirit. But it was by no means clear to all that the three divine Persons should be understood as co-equally, co-eternally, or "co-essentially" one and the same God. Hence, the most appealing, intellectually sophisticated, and plausible fourth-century alternative to what would become Nicene orthodoxy was some variant of "subordinationism." This was the school of thought (especially well established in the great city of Alexandria) that saw the Son and Spirit as derivative and lesser emanations of the Godhead of the Father—"economically" reduced versions of God mediating between the transcendence of the Father, who dwelt in light inaccessible, and the darkness of the material world.

This was a version of what is sometimes called the "pleonastic fallacy," which pervaded almost every school of Alexandrian thought: the fallacy that says

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that—since there is an infinite qualitative distance between the ultimate principle of all reality and the world of "unlikeness" here below—it is necessary to posit a certain number of intermediate principles or "hypostases" in the interval between the two in order to bridge that distance. The most speculatively accomplished forms of this fallacy were to be found among the Neoplatonists, and the most barbarous, fabulous, and risible among the various Gnostics. But among Christian thinkers the most consistent and austere form of this fallacy was found among the Arians, who were so anxious to preserve a proper sense of the Father's transcendence that they were moved to assert that the Son was a creature: the highest and most godlike of creatures, of course—worthy even of being called "God" honorifically, the Great High Priest of heaven who leads all intellectual creation in its worship of the unknowable Father—but a creature for all that.

There would be no purpose in rehearsing here the long history of the Arian controversy and its sequelae. What is important in this context is that the dogmatic discords of the fourth century forced theologians to examine perhaps more deeply than ever before (or, at least, more explicitly) the governing logic of the Church's immemorial Trinitarian diction. The greatest achievements of this period, in defense of Nicene orthodoxy, were those of the so-called Cappadocian fathers: Basil of Caesarea, Basil's younger brother Gregory of Nyssa, and Basil's friend Gregory of Nazianzus. These three, in the course of their disputes with the "Eunomians," the intellectual heirs of the Arians, grasped with a special urgency that a proper attention to biblical language regarding Father, Son, and Spirit—and, most particularly, regarding the story of our salvation in Christ—makes a subordinationist construal of that language impossible. I am simplifying their arguments rather brutally in phrasing the matter thus, but the essence of their position was that if the Son and Spirit are not God in the same sense as the Father, we cannot be saved.

It must be appreciated, I hasten to add, that "salvation" was not understood by the Cappadocian fathers in that rather feeble and formal way many Christians have habitually thought of it at various periods in the Church's history: as some sort of forensic exoneration accompanied by a ticket of entry into an Elysian aftermath of sun-soaked meadows and old friends and consummate natural beatitude. Rather, salvation meant nothing less than being joined to the living God by the mediation of the God-man Himself, brought into living contact with the transfiguring glory of the divine nature, made indeed partakers of the divine nature itself (2 Peter 1:4) and co-heirs of the Kingdom of God. In short, to be saved was—is—to be "divinized" in Christ by the Spirit. In the great formula of St. Irenaeus (and others), "God became man that man might become god."

It is precisely here, therefore, in the economy of salvation, that the true nature of the eternal Trinity must declare itself—for, simply said, no creature could ever join us to God. The calculus of the infinite is absolute: The finite can never reach the infinite, the created can never aspire to its transcendent source, and nothing—no economically reduced manifestation of the Godhead, no "ontological pleonasm" of mediating principles, no conceptual Tower of Babel erected upon the foundations of the human spirit—can unite us with God save that God in His mercy condescend to unite us to Himself, by becoming one of us. If the Son saves us by joining us to the Father, then the Son must necessarily be, in every sense, God of God, essentially and infinitely. But, then again, how are we joined to the Son? By the Holy Spirit—in the sacraments and corporate life of the Church and in His sanctifying work within the soul—and so the Spirit too, it follows, must be God of God, no less than the Son. Only God can join us to God, and so we must affirm that in the incarnation of the Son and actions of the Spirit God Himself is in our midst. Or rather, more wonderfully, we are in the midst of God, and the movement of relation among the three divine Persons, as it is unfolded through salvation history, is nothing less than the triune God drawing us into the infinite splendor of His life.

Trinitarian doctrine, then, is not merely an abstract metaphysics forcibly imposed from above upon the more spontaneous and vital experiences of the Church (though it most certainly requires and gives shape to a number of profound metaphysical conclusions); it is first and foremost a "phenomenology of salvation," a theoretical articulation of the Church's experience of being made one in Christ with God Himself. It would not be too much to say, in fact, that this is the central and guiding maxim of all Christian dogmatics, which in the twentieth century was enunciated with admirable clarity by Karl Rahner: The "economic" Trinity (that is, God in the history of salvation) is the "immanent" Trinity (that is, God in Himself) and the "immanent" Trinity is the "economic" Trinity. In witnessing the drama of redemption, we are seeing nothing less than the triune God's revelation of His eternal life within time; and so in that drama we may discern (within the limits of our created intellects) who God is.

This, at last, brings me back to Jenson, for it is Jenson's special distinction to have pursued the logic of this equation—at least, along a very particular path—more relentlessly than almost any other American the-

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ologian, in a way at once faithful to and defiant of classical Christian language. Traditionally, even in implicitly acknowledging the necessary identity of the economic Trinity and immanent Trinity, Christian theology has striven to preserve a strict and inviolable "analogical interval" between the two—that is, it has always asserted that what happens in the story of salvation is a perfect *expression* (or dramatic revelation) of how it is with God in His timeless eternity and how it would be even were there no creatures at all, but also that between this temporal expression and its eternal source there is a relation only of grace. God is not affected by time, His eternal identity knows neither before nor after, and the incarnation of the Logos is in no sense necessary to or determinative of that identity. Jenson, however, falls within a school of modern, predominantly Protestant thought that chooses to collapse this analogical interval, and to assert that the event of our salvation in Christ and the event of God's life as Trinity are simply one and the same; what occurs in Jesus of Nazareth is in some sense the story of God becoming the God He is, within which story we are also included—for love's sake.

The first and most enormous consequence of the course of reflection Jenson takes—a consequence he exuberantly embraces—is that he must reject many of the classical perfections ascribed to God, at least as they have traditionally been understood. For instance, the venerable teaching that God is, in His nature, impassible—that is, immune to suffering and change—Jenson all but absolutely abjures. More to the point, the very definition of God's eternity as "timeless" Jenson regards as unbiblical and incompatible with the story of creation and redemption. God's eternity, he claims, is intrinsically temporal, however much that temporality may transcend the fragmentary successiveness by which the days of creatures are measured. God possesses a past, present, and future, though in His infinity He possesses all of these in perfect fullness. The Father, for Jenson, is the whence of the divine life, the Spirit the whither, and the Son the present in which the divine past and divine future hold together in one life and identity.

Moreover, God's "present" is not something that can be abstracted from the particular historical identity of Jesus of Nazareth. Here is where Jenson's thought is perhaps most radical, and most in accord with one very pronounced extreme within modern Protestant dogmatics; for in his theology it is as the man Jesus—and in no other fashion—that Christ is the eternal Son and Word of the Father. There is no *Logos asarkos* for Jenson—that is, no timeless and "fleshless" Word of God; rather, God the Father has decided from all eternity to determine Himself in this man as His Son, to make Jesus the object of His perfect attention and complete preoccupation, and thereby to determine Himself as the Father of this Son. As the unique object of the Father's absolute concern, the man Jesus "stays" the consciousness of the Father and gives it the shape that it has. The eternity of the Son, therefore, begins as the eternal presupposition of the election of Jesus in the infinity of God's choice; the pre-existence of the Son is not a pre-incarnate state, but rather a pattern of movement within salvation history toward the arrival of this "incarnation."

Who God is, therefore, subsists in the Father's loving concern for the Son and the Son's loving obedience to the Father, and in the freedom of the Spirit who—as unending divine futurity—makes this relation eternal. In Jenson's rather daring formulation, the Spirit "frees" the Father and the Son for the adventure of this love and for the infinite possibility that is this love's perfection. As for us, our place in this drama is that of the companions of the Son; we are included in the story of God's freedom because Christ is the man who is for all men, and so for the Father to have Christ as His Son He must have us as well; for there is no Son apart from Him who said "Father, forgive them." And thus we are taken up into the one story of God's infinite love, in which all our particular and shared stories—insofar as they are true stories—live, and move, and have their being.

Another implication of this line of thought, from which Jenson does not shrink, is that not only does God overcome death for us in the death and resurrection of Christ, by virtue of His transcendence; He in fact overcomes death *for Himself*, indeed constitutes Himself *as* transcendent of death by way of His confrontation with death upon the cross and His triumph over death at Easter. Which is also to say that—inasmuch as God has eternally decided to determine His identity in this man—God has eternally elected the world of sin, death, and the devil "alongside" His election of the Son as the context in which the drama of triune love must be played out. Thus, even the fallenness of our world falls within the story of God's life as Trinity, but only insofar as that fallenness is overcome by God in Christ. There is sin only that we might be saved, for it is as the God who saves that the Father determines Himself in His Son, and raises the Son by the Spirit, and draws us into that mystery. The triune "event" that God is, then, involves the cross of Christ not as something incidental or subsidiary, but as (so to speak) its axis: the moment in which the Father's love for the Son and

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the Son's obedience to the Father arrive at their crisis, and in which the Spirit lifts up that love and obedience into an eternal living future.

One might justly wonder, though, how such thinking accords with traditional understandings not only of God's transcendence but of the Person and nature of Christ. After all, if indeed Irenaeus' formula is correct (and it most certainly is), how can the man Jesus—as a man—be the unique instance of a perfect union between divine and human natures in a single Person, through whom we are admitted to a share in divinity? And how can the consent of Jesus' human will to the divine will within Him serve to reconcile humanity with God? How can the divine and human wills be said to subsist together in His one Person if it is only as the man Jesus that He is the Son of the Father? But, again, Jenson's central claim is that God *is* the event of what happens between the Father and Jesus, as enabled by and lifted up in the Spirit. And so it is the human Jesus who is the second Person of the Trinity, and the human will within Jesus that is the divine will of the Son. Hence, the perfect human love of Christ for the Father, and His perfect assent to the Father's will, is also the salvific divine decision that sets all of us free, and the one great High-Priestly act whereby the Son hands all of us over—in our corporate nature—to the Father's love.

Summary is usually invidious. It is not possible to provide any great sense of the subtleties of Jenson's arguments here, nor to sketch in many of the more beguiling details of his exposition, nor certainly to convey any sense of the great biblical sweep of his narrative. And I should myself be candid and admit (in case I am—or will be—guilty of any inadvertent misrepresentations) that there is scarcely any aspect of the theological story I have just told with which I am not in profound disagreement—for reasons I believe to be at once biblical, doctrinal, philosophical, and historical. I write neither as a disciple of Jenson's, nor as a "Jensonian," but only as an admirer. But, for just this reason, I think I give myself license to declare something like perfect disinterest in the high claims I wish to make on Jenson's behalf.

There are, one should note, many extremely good reasons, thought out over many centuries, why theologians have for the most part found it impossible to do without the "analogical interval" between God's immanent life and His economic revelation of Himself, and have wanted to deny the identity of divine and human wills in Christ, and have found it necessary to affirm the *Logos asarkos*. Moreover, many of Jenson's interpretations of several of the Church fathers—the Cappadocians, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, Maximus the Confessor—are (to say the least) controversial and perhaps somewhat eccentric. There are also compelling arguments as to why it seems logically impossible to attribute actual temporality of any kind to God's eternity, and some would even argue that it was Christian philosophy (not pagan Greek thought) that first enucleated a perfectly coherent account of God's transcendence of temporal succession. And, of course, a great number of very reflective theologians continue to believe that the classical perfections traditionally ascribed to God—simplicity, timelessness, and above all impassibility—are vital not only to a rationally coherent description of the Christian faith, but to a consistent interpretation of Scripture, and indeed to the very essence of the gospel.

All that said, even the most traditionalist of theologians—even those most implacably averse to the sort of approach to Trinitarian theology that Jenson's thought represents—should be prepared not only to praise Jenson, but to submit their convictions to his interrogations. He is simply one of the most provocative, ingenious, and formidable proponents of a certain kind of Trinitarianism writing today, and he possesses a singular power to call any number of comfortable traditional certitudes into question. More to the point, theologians of every stripe should praise him for enunciating a Trinitarian theology with whose biblical *shape*—that is to say, specifically, his reading of scripture as Trinitarian throughout—it is impossible to take issue. Indeed, if one contemplates that shape in all its contours, one must almost certainly acknowledge that, were it not for the absence of the aforementioned "analogical interval," Jenson's theology might well appear to be the purest orthodoxy. And yet that interval remains absent: It is a small difference; it is an immense difference; and it is a difference that cannot be negotiated away, mediated in some third term, or reconciled.

At the same time, however, no one familiar with the development of modern theology could really deny that there is something of an historical fatedness in this irreconcilability; and this is a sobering and chastening thought. Jenson most definitely comes from that Protestant tradition that has long deplored (without doubting the historical necessity of) the alliance struck between the theology of the early Church and "Hellenism"—or, to be more precise, "Platonism."

But there is another venerable school of thought that still regards this alliance as definitive and indissoluble, and is therefore predisposed to view that part of Protestant tradition that Jenson represents as misguided and destructive. After all, it is arguable that "Hellenism" is already an intrinsic dimension of the New Testament itself and that some kind of "Platonism" is inseparable from the Christian faith. In short, many

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theologians view the development of Christian metaphysics over the millennium and a half leading to the Reformation as perfectly in keeping with the testimony of Scripture, and "Hellenized" Christianity as the special work of the Holy Spirit—with which no baptized Christian may safely break. To such theologians, the alliance struck in much modern dogmatics between theology and German idealism is a far greater source of concern than any imagined "Greek captivity" of the Church.

Here, however, one must tread cautiously. There was among theologians a great revival of interest in Trinitarian theology during the latter half of the twentieth century, but it tended to fall into two distinct camps: those who sought to rearticulate the doctrine of the Trinity by way of a full return to the patristic and medieval sources of the tradition, and those who did so directly in response to—and so largely in the terms of—the "Trinitarian" metaphysics of Hegel and others. It is with this latter camp that one tends to associate the collapse of the analogical interval that Jenson seems to advocate; at first glance (and at several glances thereafter), it is extremely easy to read Jenson merely as a representative of the German idealist tendency in modern dogmatics, and specifically as a disciple of the greatest of the German idealists, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, in his early phase. But Jenson actually, it seems, takes his arguments from his own reading of Scripture; I have it on good authority (Jenson himself, to be exact) that Schelling's thought has had no appreciable direct influence on Jenson's at all.

Nevertheless, it is hard not to place Jenson in that company, if for no other reason than that he is willing to speak of God becoming the God He is, determining Himself in time, *choosing* to be *this* God—the Father of Jesus of Nazareth—and doing so in an irreducibly temporal fashion. If nothing else, in reading Jenson a theologian committed to traditional Catholic metaphysics will almost inevitably find himself suffering from the same apprehensions inspired in him by other, more indisputably "Teutonized" theologians, and thus he will find himself raising certain very classical objections to what he is reading: Does it make sense, ultimately, to speak of God both as the source of all being and yet as *becoming* the God He is? Can temporality be intelligibly ascribed to God without one's theology lapsing into contradiction or myth? What of the moral nature of God, if He must elect sin, death, and evil as the context of His self-determination in time? If it is true that, in order for God to transcend death, He must triumph over it in time, is death then an independent reality over against God?

Perhaps most crucially, what could it mean to speak of God determining Himself, of God choosing to be the God He is? Could He choose otherwise? Is there—as classical Christian thought has always denied—"possibility" in God, potential that must be realized? How then could He be the infinite source of all actuality, from which everything draws its being? There really are many very sound reasons why the Church has long maintained that this sort of deliberative choice—this sort of arbitrary power of decision—would be an imperfection in the divine nature, a mark of finitude, in fact a limitation upon the divine freedom. God *is* God, and the infinite eternal actuality of this "is"—unbounded by any outward necessity, never needing to become what it is, undimmed by possibility, undivided by succession—is absolute freedom. And so it must surely be degrading to the divine majesty, many are inclined to think, to speak of God *choosing* to be the God He is.

And yet precisely here one encounters perhaps the best example of Jenson's power to shake even the firmest traditionalist certitudes. No one else's theology that I know of has the biblical depth to make theologians of my persuasion so poignantly conscious of the metaphoric limitations that encumber all the words we attempt to use of God, and of how quickly our terms can disintegrate into incoherence when we attempt to press them past a very rudimentary level of signification. When Jenson speaks of divine temporality, he surely does not mean to suggest that God experiences time as we do: as loss, as the possibility of things that may never come, as always fragmentary and haunted by disappointments and vain longings, as a future never yet possessed and only dimly imagined, as a present forever slipping away into oblivion, as a past mourned or regretted. Nor certainly, I am sure, does he speak of God's decision to be *this* God intending us to understand that decision in a human way. For us, after all, decision is always preceded by some kind of indecision, and no decision can be reached that is not in some sense the arbitrary selection of possibilities confronting us from outside ourselves. One may find the language of "choice" unsatisfactory, but no one who reads Jenson should be unwilling to acknowledge that the mere denial of "choice" within God is no less inadequate to the truth theology wants to describe. For in saying that God's nature suffers no constraints, one should want also to urge that God is not passively or indifferently the God He is, and that His will abides in perfect freedom. And to speak of this mystery, no language really suffices.

My principal reason, however, for thinking Jenson's work so enormously important for serious theologians, or even just for reflective Christians who have had the good sense not to become theologians, has to

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do with the single great Christian mystery from which all theology arises: the mystery of the Person of Christ. For numerous reasons (which cannot be enumerated here, alas), it is an absolutely essential theological principle that there is nothing arbitrary or accidental in the relation of the identity of Jesus of Nazareth to that of the eternal Logos. Jesus is not an avatar of the Logos, a mask the Son assumes in a transient or extrinsic fashion, or a part he plays in some grand cosmic charade. When God becomes man, this is the man He becomes—and there can be no other. That is why it is silly to ask the questions that bad theologians, or casual catechists, or well-meaning Sunday school teachers have sometimes felt moved to ask: whether the Son might have been incarnate as someone else—as a Viking, or a Nigerian, or a woman, or simply another first century Jew. The Logos, when He divests Himself of His divine glory, is this man; between this finite historical individual and the eternal and infinite Son of God, there is no caesura. Jesus is not just one manifestation of the Son, but the Son in His only true human form.

It is an understanding of just this truth that lies at the very heart of Jenson's theology, and that constitutes its secret motive power in every part. Jenson's thought represents, to my mind, the most ambitious and unflagging attempt any American theologian has yet made fully to grasp the uniqueness of Christ—the one incommutable human identity of the incarnate God—which is no simple thing. When any theologian is daring enough to risk reflection upon this mystery, he is immediately immersed in all the other mysteries that must attend it: time and eternity, necessity and freedom, divine sovereignty and divine abasement—above all the mystery of where Christ's "cry of dereliction" on the cross ("My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?") falls within the life of the Trinity. Jenson has never failed to struggle with any of these questions.

This is not to say that the theologian whose convictions in this matter run counter to Jenson's cannot plausibly argue precisely the contrary case: that only by affirming God's timelessness and the reality of the *Logos asarkos* can we truly say that the identity of Jesus of Nazareth is in no sense arbitrary and that God has not somehow chosen this one man out of an infinity of other possibilities. But this in no way diminishes the power of Jenson's meditations upon the mystery of the identity of the divine Son or the appeal his thinking should exercise upon any theologian concerned to approach that same mystery in an attitude of reverent inquiry. In the end, as I have already more or less argued, it is the entire shape of Jenson's narrative that proves so compelling, as that narrative unfolds around the Person of Christ. Here one need only direct the reader to Jenson's work: there (especially in his *Systematic Theology*) one will find an account of the triune God drawing near to us—and of us drawing near to Him—of extraordinary richness, one that is (depending on one's temperament or intellectual affiliations) either seductive or scandalous, but one that is also impossible to dismiss or forget.

Again, I feel free to plead my own disinterest where Jenson is concerned. As it happens—to return to the anecdote with which I began—whatever elf or imp it is that arranges the little ironies of our lives had contrived that, on returning home from the interview with the young divinity school student that I mentioned above, I should find an e-mail waiting for me from a fairly authoritative interpreter of Jenson's work, complaining that my critique of Jenson's theology, in the very book concerning which I had just been interviewed, had been written in such a way as to appear merely as an exemplary episode within my own narrative of modern philosophy, and thus had all but entirely failed to provide a balanced account of Jenson's theological intentions, or of the greater scope of his thought, or of the biblical concerns animating it. And after some hours of indignation, I came to the conclusion that this was quite probably true. Hence this article (though I cannot be sure I have not merely compounded my earlier malfeasance with an inadequate synopsis).

So, speaking for myself, I wish to say only that I find it impossible to have done with Jenson's work, or to cease returning to it as a challenge to refine and clarify my own understanding of the gospel. And whenever I make that return, I cannot help but feel that, in a small way, the experience is rather like that of Jacob wrestling with God in His angel at the ford of Jabbok. No one of my theological persuasion, I think, who engages Jenson's thought in earnest can doubt that it is indeed the living God with whom he has come to grips: not some fabulous metaphysical phantom conjured out of Jenson's fixations or fantasies, but a genuine attempt to describe the God of Scripture in the fullness of His historical presence and eternal identity. Nor, I think, can such a theologian hope to retreat from that contest without a wound; but neither, for that matter, will he depart without a blessing. FT

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The Supreme Court Rules: 2005

Michael M. Uhlmann

This year's Supreme Court term was, all things considered, a fairly mild affair—if by mild is meant no declarations of freshly minted constitutional rights or sudden detours into unexplored legal territory of the sort we have come to expect in recent years. A narrow majority did declare for the first time that "evolving standards of decency" made execution of juveniles unconstitutional. The novel turn, however, occurred not this year but back in 2002, when the "evolving standards" contrivance was employed to forbid execution of the mentally retarded. This year's decision followed from that as the night the day. Similarly, although many were shocked by this term's ruling allowing local governments to seize residential property, recent opinions by the Court made this year's conclusion nearly inevitable.

Both of these were 5-4 decisions, as were the Court's split rulings in two Ten Commandments cases—one allowing, the other disallowing, display of the commandments on public property. In a third religion case, involving the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, the justices agreed unanimously (and correctly) to uphold the statute against an Establishment Clause challenge. Given the Court's decidedly mixed track record on religious questions in recent years, we should perhaps be grateful that the justices got two out of three right this time around. At least the public square was not made noticeably more hostile toward religion than it was a year ago.

Giving thanks because the wolf didn't eat you, however, is not the same as giving thanks because the wolf is dead. Merely to describe the Court in such terms is to recognize its power to affect political culture and the extent to which the resolution of important legal questions depends less on principle than on the idiosyncrasies of particular justices. This term's opposing Ten Commandments decisions underscore the point. On 5-4 votes the justices overruled the first display, but upheld the second after Justice Stephen Breyer switched sides. Breyer proffered an argument based on minor factual differences between the two displays, concluding that one was more "divisive" than the other. His irreducibly subjective judgment on that point, however, gives no guidance about what will or will not pass constitutional muster next time. The constitutionality of religious displays thus hangs on the disposition of a single judge whose reasoning will not withstand close scrutiny. Not for nothing do we war these days over Supreme Court nominees. But whatever happened to the rule of law?

For many Court watchers, the big news of the term—other than the announcement of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's retirement—was the apparent demise of the Rehnquist Court's federalism revolution in *Raich v. Gonzales*, the medical marijuana case. One has to say "apparent demise" because there wasn't much of a revolution to begin with and, in any event, it is not clear whether *Raich* brought it to an end. *Raich* involved the question whether Congress' power to regulate interstate commerce, as expressed in the Controlled Substances Act, could override California's legalization of medical marijuana. The medical marijuana users rested their case on recent Supreme Court decisions that, for the first time since the New Deal, had narrowed the definition of interstate commerce.

Beginning with its 1938 term, the Court actively promoted broad national authority over economic and social affairs, at the expense of state power. The justices relied on novel and expansive interpretations of the spending and taxing power, the general welfare clause, and, above all, congressional power over interstate commerce. The high point (or low, depending on your perspective) occurred in *Wickard v. Filburn* (1942), where the Court decided that even wheat grown by a farmer for his own consumption was nevertheless in

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interstate commerce and therefore subject to federal control. After *Wickard*, it was hard to see how any activity, no matter how small or remote from national interest, could escape potential federal regulation. The idea that the federal government was a government of limited powers gradually disappeared, with the approbation of the federal judiciary.

There matters lay until the 1980s, when occasional majorities of the Rehnquist Court began to nibble away at the presumption that Congress could do whatever it wanted. Nibble is the operative word in the preceding sentence. A number of recent cases, for example, have sought to shore up state sovereign immunity by limiting the extent to which states can be sued without their consent, or by insisting that states may not be pressed into service as mere administrative agents of federal policy. These decisions are symbolically important, but they are hardly capable of redefining the balance of power between federal and state government.

Other cases, such as *U.S. v. Lopez* (1995) and *U.S. v. Morrison* (2000), placed modest restrictions on congressional power to define interstate commerce. In *Raich*, the California marijuana litigation, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals relied on *Lopez* and *Morrison* to argue that usage within a single state did not "substantially affect" interstate commerce and was therefore beyond the reach of Congress.

When *Raich* reached the Supreme Court, however, the justices overruled the Ninth Circuit. Justice John Paul Stevens, who has sharply dissented from efforts to place even mild restrictions on federal regulatory authority, must have taken almost perverse pleasure in resurrecting *Wickard v. Filburn* as the governing standard for testing the reach of the commerce power. The liberal and conservative wings of the current Court will continue to debate the reach of the commerce clause, but it is at bottom a debate at the margins of an overriding consensus favoring the New Deal resolution. With the possible exception of Justice Clarence Thomas, no one on the current Court wants to undo that bargain.

To almost everyone's surprise, the most hotly disputed case of the term was *Kelo v. City of New London*. The issue was New London's power to seize and demolish residences, thereafter conveying the vacant land to commercial owners in an effort to promote economic revitalization. Certain property owners resisted the city's condemnation proceedings and sought relief on the grounds that the city's proposed action failed the "public use" test under the Takings Clause of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution ("nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation").

Writing for a 5-4 majority, Justice Stevens concluded "public use" did not require the city to take permanent title or make the acquired property generally available to the public following condemnation. A valid economic development plan was sufficient justification for the taking. In short, "public use" for all intents and purposes means "public purpose," and, Stevens made clear, the federal judiciary will not question a local government's definition of what constitutes a valid public purpose.

Eminent domain jurisprudence can generate a head of steam among property lawyers and the landowners directly affected, but the predations of local government against property rights have never stirred much interest beyond these audiences. The *Kelo* decision may change all that. Public anger exploded once it was discovered that government planners could constitutionally displace real people living in real houses in favor of commercial redevelopers, for no other reason than that the new arrangements *might* be profitable for the city. The public understands and generally tolerates condemnation for public use. If the reaction to *Kelo* is any measure, public opinion appears to have limited tolerance when governments condemn property and give it to someone else in an effort to generate more tax revenue.

How deeply the anti-*Kelo* sentiment runs is impossible to say, but it has already led a number of states to tighten their condemnation laws. Given the narrow split among the justices in *Kelo*, a subsequent case may well lead to a reversal or narrowing of the new rule. Justice Stevens' opinion certainly made federal constitutional challenges against local government land grabs far more difficult to sustain, but it broke no radically new ground. In a number of recent decisions, the Court had already paved the way for *Kelo*. Indeed, as Justice Thomas noted in his passionate dissent, the majority paid far more attention to the Court's own rulings than it did to the purpose and history of the Constitution's Takings Clause. He also pointed out that the typical losers in local condemnation proceedings are those who can least afford it—poor, working class, and minority populations whose neighborhoods are torn up for freeway overpasses and shopping malls.

A notable feature of the majority opinion in *Kelo* is its straight-faced invocation of legislative deference. It would be presumptuous of the Supreme Court, Justice Stevens argued, to second-guess the considered judgment of local authorities over the details of urban revitalization. Such deference is a laudable concept, but it makes only cameo appearances on the liberal stage. It is strangely absent from the liberal temperament when the subject under review is, for example, the regulation of abortion or the presence of religion in the public

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square. Legislative deference in such matters suddenly gives way to "strict scrutiny," a self-empowering interpretive rule invented by the Court for those occasions when it wishes to question legislative purpose and its possible adverse effects.

An analogous inconsistency may be found with this year's decision in *Roper v. Simmons*, which held that the Eighth Amendment's prohibition of "cruel and unusual punishment" now requires a flat rule forbidding the execution of minors. Only fifteen years ago, the Court had reached the opposite conclusion, upholding the constitutionality of such executions in *Stanford v. Kentucky*. But now a different majority of the Court has simply invoked a new rule of interpretation, based on Earl Warren's mantra about "evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society." The Warren standard was vigorously asserted in the 2002 *Atkins v. Virginia*, when the majority declared that the execution of mentally retarded persons ought to be unconstitutional.

As Justice Antonin Scalia has argued with some force and frequency, the Court's majority can give no assurance that standards will always evolve in a humane direction. In both *Atkins* and *Roper*, the majority cited foreign legal authority and public opinion as some sort of demonstration of "decent" evolution. The cited authorities, however, demonstrate no such thing. For all we know, the world may be moving closer to a brutal version of Islamic *shari'a* than to some imagined standard of humane Western enlightenment. The justices' reliance on evolving standards of decency, in short, rests on an unexamined, almost touching faith in the idea of Progress. That faith is the divining rod by which the Court's majority sifts through all sorts of contrary evidence, selecting only those trends that confirm their own view of the world. One may be forgiven for concluding that reliance on foreign law, like the invocation of changing public opinion or evolving standards of decency, is little more than an expression of the majority's ideological preferences. Why such preferences should be elevated to the status of constitutional rules has yet to be adequately explained.

Consider: It was an evolving standard of privacy that gave us *Roe v. Wade*, an evolving standard of substantive due process that justified partial birth abortion, an evolving standard of free expression that has choked political speech while allowing pornography to flood the marketplace of ideas. Evolving standards, in a word, are no standards at all; they mock the concept of a written Constitution.

The problem with evolving standards is perhaps nowhere better exemplified than in the Court's jurisprudence concerning the Establishment Clause. Here, competing and contradictory principles vie for dominance among opposing groups of justices. As anyone who has litigated before the Court will readily testify, predicting the outcome of a religion case is nearly impossible. The Court has been wrestling with such matters for at least six decades, but as this year's term demonstrates, it cannot even write a reasonably coherent rule regarding government-sponsored religious displays. What we have instead of a principled constitutional understanding is a collection of modern prejudices about the nature of religion that tell us more about the predilections of the justices who hold them than they do about the meaning of the First Amendment.

The error was bred in 1947 with *Everson v. Board of Education*, where the Court decided for the first time to apply the Establishment Clause against the states. The logic of this dubious proposition was asserted but never argued, and to this day the only authority for it has been the Court's own *ex cathedra* declaration. *Everson* made the Court into the nation's final school board and zoning commission on all matters touching religion. That fact alone would have created a complicated and laborious agenda, but the Court compounded its problems by adopting two other rules in the case: It mandated strict separationism as its substantive standard of review, and it redefined establishment to forbid not only preference for one sect over another, but the preference of religion over non-religion generally.

Such was, at least, the announced mandate of *Everson*. A consistent application of this rule, however, would have required a wholesale assault on American political culture and led to politically hostile consequences for the Court itself. A literal application of the *Everson* doctrine would, for instance, void all tax exemptions for religious institutions as well as legislative and military chaplains. These and a variety of other longstanding, non-sectarian forms of assistance to religion, however, continue to thrive and have even been approved, if somewhat grudgingly, by the Court itself. At the same time, the Court has been aggressive in its efforts to extirpate many other longstanding customs such as public prayer and, more recently, religious symbols in the public square.

Rather than acknowledge that its rule was deficient, however, the Court maintained allegiance to the shibboleths of strict separation even as it carved out exceptions that mocked the Court's doctrinal assumptions. A curious intellectual schizophrenia has thus marked modern First Amendment jurisprudence from its inception. The case law is riddled with examples in which varying majorities of the Court turn now this way, and now that way, in a confusing and increasingly feckless effort to rationalize prior precedents. Every so

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often, as if annoyed by its own failures, the Court will draw itself up to full height and announce a new architectonic rule, one theoretically capable of encompassing all, or at least most, church-state issues.

The most important of these efforts, the so-called *Lemon* test, contrived in 1973, offers a three-part rule: In order to pass constitutional muster, government aid to religion must have a secular purpose, neither advance nor inhibit religion, and not foster excessive government entanglement with religion.

There's hardly a word in *Lemon*'s multi-part rule that doesn't create lawyerly quibbles. Take the secular-purpose test, for just one instance: Will *any* secular purpose do? What is a court to do if the record shows the purpose to be partly religious and partly secular? Must a judge determine which is dominant, and if so, how? Precisely how far is a judge supposed to probe in divining legislative intent? Does the sponsor's intent prevail, or what other legislators say about it?

Such questions could be multiplied more or less at will, and merely to ask them suggests just how subjective the *Lemon* test is. Not surprisingly, it has proven in application to be as much honored in the breach as in the observance. Still, the Court will not let it go. In a justifiably sardonic and all-too-accurate summary of *Lemon*'s status in a 1993 case, Justice Scalia wrote:

> Like some ghoul in a late-night horror movie that repeatedly sits up in its grave and shuffles abroad, after being repeatedly killed and buried, *Lemon* stalks our Establishment Clause jurisprudence once again, frightening the little children and school attorneys of Center Moriches Union Free School District.... Its most recent burial, only last Term, was, to be sure, not fully six feet under.... Over the years, however, no fewer than five of the currently sitting Justices have, in their own opinions, personally driven pencils through the creature's heart.
>
> The secret of the *Lemon* test's survival, I think, is that it is so easy to kill. It is there to scare us (and our audience) when we wish it to do so, but we can command it to return to the tomb at will. When we wish to strike down a practice it forbids, we invoke it;... when we wish to uphold a practice it forbids, we ignore it entirely.... Sometimes, we take the middle course, calling its three prongs "no more than helpful signposts."... Such a docile and useful monster is worth keeping around, at least in somnolent state; one never knows when one might need him.

Nothing has changed in the twelve years since Scalia issued his criticism. *Lemon* still rises from the dead to frighten the unwary, but it stays safely in the crypt when a majority of the justices so wills. Both phenomena were on display in this term's Ten Commandments litigation. *Lemon* stalked the earth in Kentucky, where Justice David Souter wrote for a five-person majority in *McCreary County v. American Civil Liberties Union*. But the ghoul was kept at bay in Texas, where the Chief Justice Rehnquist wrote a plurality opinion in *Van Orden v. Perry*.

One can parse forever the factual differences between the Kentucky and Texas litigation. The law reviews will, predictably, exhaust real and imagined distinctions in the various proceedings at great length, and those distinctions will hold for precisely the length of time it takes for another Ten Commandments case to reach the Court, when they will be replaced by yet finer distinctions on which great legal consequences will be said to rest.

The factual differences here, however, have less to do with facts, as such, than with the ideological suppositions various justices bring to their evaluation. For example, in the Kentucky litigation, much was made of the fact that the displays were changed to include more secular trappings after the ACLU filed its original complaint. Liberals look at the changes and say they confirm an effort to disguise a fundamentally religious purpose. Conservatives see the same facts as confirming only a well-intended desire to comply with an admittedly confusing if not contradictory body of rules emanating from *Lemon*.

Seemingly important but ultimately irrelevant factual differences may also be observed in the Texas case. In his concurring opinion sustaining a commandments monument on the state capitol lawn, Justice Breyer made much of the fact that the display was first erected in 1961 (in contrast to Kentucky's, which appeared only in the 1990s). Noting that no one had complained until recently, he concluded that the monument was not perceived as imposing sectarian preference. Justice Souter noted the same installation date and concluded, rightly, that age proved nothing: Would-be complaining parties may well have been deterred by fear of financial cost or social ostracism.

These cases, in the end, tell us next to nothing about the operative principles that ought to govern religious displays. Prior to this year's litigation, six federal circuits had addressed Ten Commandments displays, splitting 4-2 in favor. The various opinions in *Van Orden* and *McCreary* (there were ten altogether) offer no clear guidance to lower courts addressing the question in the future. District and circuit judges will divide as they have in the past, picking and choosing among the opinions of various justices to support their conclusions. As if to underscore the point, an *en banc* ruling of the Eighth Circuit in August sustained a Ten

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Commandments monument in Plattsmouth, Nebraska, overruling a prior three-judge panel of the same circuit. The pattern of confusion that obtained before this term will persist.

After nearly six decades to ponder the depths of what is one of the central questions of American political culture, the justices have offered nothing except the very divisiveness some of them say the First Amendment was designed to prevent. But a Court that can't bring its own house to order can hardly expect lower courts, much less the nation, to understand or follow a rule that is, to say no more, hardly a rule at all. A change in personnel may be helpful, but even that will not be enough unless the Court is willing to revisit *Everson*. A more or less working majority of the current Court is wedded to strict separation theory—often enough, at least, to make relatively simple cases like Ten Commandments displays highly complicated. A majority has from time to time broken with the dictates of strict separation, as, for example, in the school-voucher litigation, but it has yet to articulate a principled alternative vision of what the Establishment Clause properly requires.

A good beginning would be to recognize that the First Amendment does not, and never did, require strict neutrality as between religion and non-religion for purposes of the Establishment Clause. Requiring the state to be neutral as between sects is both constitutionally necessary and morally desirable. Requiring it to be neutral as between religion and non-religion generally produces a decidedly un-neutral result—the triumph of practical atheism in the public square. Surely, a majority of the Court can understand that much. But which majority will it be that pushes the next case one way or the other—the one that sustained a display of the Ten Commandments, or the one that opposed it?

What difference will Sandra Day O'Connor's retirement make in the work of the Court? Justice O'Connor has been claimed as an ally by certain conservative commentators, especially on federalism issues, and as a friend by liberals on abortion, affirmative action, and religion cases. On balance, the liberals have the better part of the argument.

Along with Justices Souter and Kennedy, she contrived the "undue burden" test for abortion regulation, which became just a new verbal formula permitting a pregnant woman to do as she wills, even when her child is partly delivered. O'Connor once famously remarked that *Roe v. Wade* was "on a collision course with itself," but she never followed that insight to its logical conclusion.

Justice O'Connor was willing in theory to subject quota-like affirmative action programs to "strict scrutiny," but her own judicial inspection rarely found a racial preference program that could not pass constitutional muster. On the Establishment Clause, she is best known for having invented the so-called "endorsement" test, a multi-part monstrosity that has gone through a number of iterations without acquiring much in the way of support from any of O'Connor's colleagues on either side of the ideological divide. Although nominally designed to palliate the effects of strict separationism, the endorsement formula quickly became just another rhetorical device by which religion could be excluded from the public square. With Justice O'Connor's departure from the Court this fall, the test will disappear without having left much of an imprint on the law.

O'Connor's style of judging—a preference for rules of decision that made every case seem like a one-time experience—became over time almost a caricature of itself. It certainly enhanced her power on the Court as a swing vote, and there were occasions in recent years when almost all the briefs in particular cases seemed to have been written with O'Connor, and only O'Connor, in mind. Flattering to her, no doubt, but another sad reminder of how much our constitutional law has come to depend on individual judicial preferences.

Justice O'Connor's nominated successor, John Roberts, will surely be an improvement on all these fronts. One can infer only so much about future behavior from the memoranda and briefs written by Roberts while in government service or private practice, but there seems little doubt that he is a man of vigorous conservative disposition. The expression of that disposition will have to await particular facts, but with his arrival and O'Connor's departure, this year's revival of the *Lemon* test may prove to be a one-term thing. It will take two *more* votes to drive a stake permanently through its heart, so that even if Chief Justice Rehnquist retired tomorrow and were replaced by Justice Scalia's clone, *Lemon* would still be free to haunt the night.

The new term that begins in October will be a heady one. The Court has already agreed to revisit the conflict between federal regulatory control and the use of narcotics in religious rituals. It will also address the conflict between Oregon's assisted suicide law and federal policy, and the constitutionality of parental notification in cases where minors seek to have abortions. There is nothing in the recently completed term to suggest that next year results will be any less confusing than this year's. John Roberts will be an improvement, but one vote is still only one vote—which is why the battle over the next vacancy will be so bloody. FT

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Books in Review

An Indifferent Reconciliation

Is the Reformation Over? An Evangelical Assessment of Contemporary Roman Catholicism
By Mark A. Noll and Carolyn Nystrom
Baker Academic. 272 pp. $24.99.

Reviewed by Geoffrey Wainwright

The character of this friendly book by Mark A. Noll and Carolyn Nystrom is best captured by its subtitle: "An Evangelical Assessment of Contemporary Roman Catholicism." The book offers—from an evangelical perspective—an historical account of the shift that has occurred over the last fifty years toward a more mutually sympathetic attitude between some Protestant evangelicals and some Roman Catholics. The book's geographical center of gravity lies in North America, and particularly in the United States.

For this reader at least, the literary and rhetorical difficulty for such a book consists in locating within a single frame of discourse the respective partners in the changing relationship, and this difficulty itself points to the theological and ecclesiological problem that the authors rightly sense underlies their title question: "Is the Reformation Over?" On the one hand, the Roman Catholic partners in the recent rapprochement always know that they belong to an ecclesial body that understands itself to be one, and in which the sole Church of Jesus Christ "subsists." On the other hand, self-identified evangelicals are linked among themselves by a set of elective affinities, while belonging to a potpourri of Protestant denominations that display only a limited and variable concern about their own existence in institutional separation from one another, let alone from the Roman Catholic Church.

The recent shift in attitudes between some evangelicals and some Catholics naturally involves a reexamination of the doctrinal topics on which basic and continuing agreement between classical Protestantism and Roman Catholicism has sometimes been obscured—as well as a reexamination of those topics that were divisive in the sixteenth century and have remained controversial ever since. The shift also reflects some broader social and political developments. Finally, one cannot explain the change in attitudes without referring to the sometimes unacknowledged achievements of the ecumenical movement that began with the twentieth century and to which many self-styled evangelicals and the Roman Catholic Church itself were

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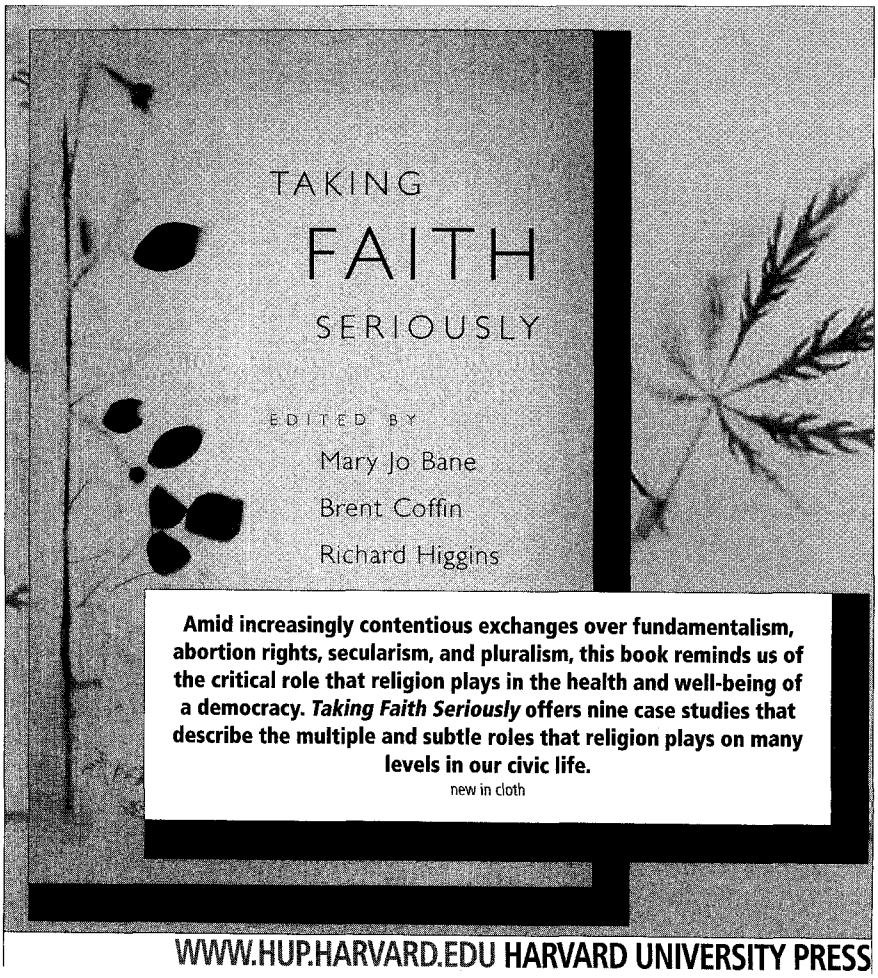
latecomers. Noll and Nystrom weave their substantive doctrinal discussion together with some of these contextual factors.

They begin impressionistically with some symptoms of popular change: the growing acceptability among Catholics of the iconic Baptist evangelist Billy Graham, the adoption by Catholics of the Alpha courses initiated at Holy Trinity Brompton, the inclusion of hymns by Protestant authors in Catholic hymnals, the welcome afforded by many evangelicals to the witness and writings of Pope John Paul II, a favorable review by the star evangelical intellectual J.I. Packer of a book titled *The Born-Again Catholic* (1983), and so on.

Mutual polemics between Catholics and Protestants in general go back to the sixteenth century. Dating at least from the declaration of the Evangelical Alliance at New York in 1873 that "the most formidable foe of living Christianity among us is . . . the nominally Christian Church of Rome," the particular "historic standoff" between evangelicals and Catholics lasted, as our authors show, in virtually unmitigated form until the late 1950s. The "rapid about-face" began in the early 1960s under the impulse of the Second Vatican Council and "its willingness to address non-Catholic Christians as 'brothers,' to acknowledge that blame lay on both sides for the ecclesiastical ruptures of the Reformation, to stress the unique role of Christ as mediator between God and humanity, and to urge ordinary lay Catholics to live lives of practical Christian holiness." Especially important in the United States was the accommodation between the religious claims of the Catholic Church and the American passion for civil liberties, an accommodation symbolized by the election of the Catholic John F. Kennedy as President in 1960 and by the Vatican II declaration on religious liberty, which owed much to the American Jesuit John Courtney Murray.

Noll and Nystrom next survey the international bilateral dialogues on matters of doctrine that followed in the wake of Vatican II between the Roman Catholic Church, on the one hand, and the various "world confessional families" or "Christian world communions," on the other. They note the theological agreements registered by the diverse bilateral commissions and the remaining differences and problems acknowledged by them. Curiously, Noll and Nystrom do not stop to ask why the Catholic Church launched precisely this pattern of multiple bilateral dialogues, nor why the various Protestant bodies so readily entered into these dialogues. Significantly—and this may point to an ecclesiological blind spot on their part—Noll and Nystrom fail to remark that the reports of such dialogues have not so far been adopted into the official teaching of either the Catholic Church or of the participating Protestant denominations. The exception is the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification signed by the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation on October 31, 1999. The authors recognize the substantive importance of this text but not the ecclesiological significance of its official adoption.

Even more strangely, Noll and Nystrom ignore the doctrinal work done in multilateral dialogue through the World Council of Churches, and particularly its Commission on Faith and Order. The classic Protestant bodies were the chief initiators of such multilateral ecumenism from its modern beginnings, and since 1968 twelve of the Commission's official members have been Roman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Catholic. Several of these theologians contributed significantly to the 1982 Lima text on Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry, to which the official response of the Catholic Church was very positive. Ignoring the convergences registered and acknowledged in the Lima text, Noll and Nystrom seem to assume that historic differences in sacramentology between Catholics and Protestants—and indeed among the latter (including evangelicals)—remain basically unchanged. Their lack of attention to Commission on Faith and Order proves a liability when the authors come to their more systematic discussion of such questions as Scripture and Tradition, and (crucially) the doctrine of the Church.

After their survey of the bilateral dialogues, Noll and Nystrom examine the universal *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992; English 1994). "Evangelical or confessional Protestants who pick up the *Catechism* will," they say, "find themselves in for a treat." The "depth of scholarship, worn quite lightly" is appreciated, as well as the "strikingly pastoral tone." The *Catechism*'s substance is approved at many points, and "in the areas where Protestants and Catholics are likely to disagree (for example, the sacraments, pope, Mary, purgatory), it expresses official Catholic teaching clearly," so that Protestant readers may at least "come away with a better understanding of why Catholics think as they do on such subjects."

NEXT UP is the informal American phenomenon of Evangelicals and Catholics Together, which was sparked in the 1990s by the perceived need for a common witness on current social issues ("cobelligerence"). Later, the group also considered more fundamental theological matters, such as the doctrine of salvation and the ecclesiological questions implied in different understandings of the relation between Scripture and Tradition and of "the communion of saints."

The following chapter describes some individual reactions to apparent Catholic-evangelical rapprochement, which range from antagonism through criticism and partnership to conversion in one direction or the other. The authors disarmingly look for lessons that can be drawn by evangelicals from the reasons given by former evangelicals who have gone "home to Rome": a richer worship, a greater depth in history, a religious certainty, an identifiably united

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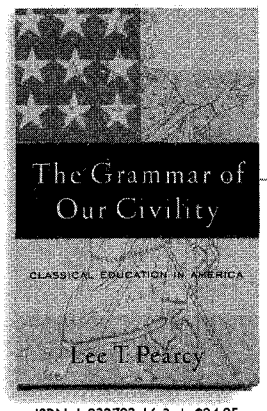

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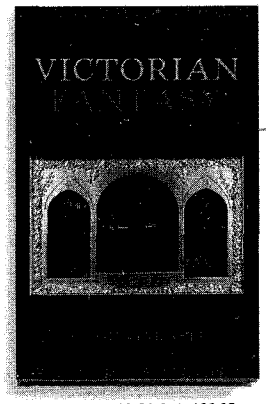

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Church, a firm teaching authority. In turn, evangelicals have some justified criticisms to address to historic and contemporary Catholicism. Mutual admonition is the order of the day.

In the last two chapters, the authors make their concluding assessment: first in social and political terms by analyzing the positions of evangelicals and Catholics with regard to main themes in American history; second in more biblical and theological terms as they seek to answer the question they set themselves in their title. They take pride in the contribution of Protestantism to liberal democracy.

No mention is made of the heresy of "Americanism" that was condemned as a form of modernism by Pope Leo XIII at the very end of the nineteenth century. Noll and Nystrom seem less perturbed than they might be by the ways in which the individualism endemic to Protestantism may have contributed to the contemporary "dictatorship of relativism" castigated by Joseph Ratzinger on the eve of his election as Pope Benedict XVI.

Biblically and theologically, the authors welcome some convergence between the parties on the doctrine of salvation but rightly recognize the doctrine of the Church as "the crux of Catholic-evangelical disagreement." Although they cite the Baptist theologian Timothy George in a way that shows his awareness of the ground-breaking work of the World Conference on Faith and Order at Montreal in 1963 on "Scripture, Tradition, and traditions," Noll and Nystrom make no systematic use of his insights; they also neglect to note the phraseology of Pope John Paul II when he called for further study on "the relationship between Sacred Scripture as the highest authority in matters of faith and Sacred Tradition as indispensable to the interpretation of the Word of God" (*Ut Unum Sint*, 79)—a formulation that I think may hold the best promise of resolving the question since the sixteenth century. Nor do the authors pick up on the same pope's astonishing invitation of the leaders of other churches and their theologians to a "patient and fraternal dialogue" to help find ways in which the pastoral and doctrinal ministry of Peter might be differently exercised in the service of universal Christian unity—a move that opened the prospect of a "reformed papacy" such as Luther, at least, was willing to contemplate.

Disappointingly, our authors seem to acquiesce in the false opposition often drawn between the Lausanne Covenant of Evangelicals in 1974 and the Catholic Catechism of 1992: "For Catholics, the Church constitutes believers; for evangelicals, believers constitute the Church. For Catholics, individual believers are a function of the Church; for evangelicals, the Church is a function of individual believers." Most serious of all, our authors share the regular inability of evangelicals to grapple with the necessary tangibility of ecclesial unity. This tangibility was given its classic description by the Commission on Faith and Order, approved by the New Delhi Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1961, and recently taken up again in the Princeton Proposal for Christian Unity, *In One Body through the Cross* (2003). The unity that is both God's gift and our task

> is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Savior are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship, holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people.

The vision of Noll and Nystrom does not rise above "cooperation" between Catholics and evangelicals; it is innocent of the category of "degrees of communion" introduced by the Vatican II decree on ecumenism that opened the way to a dynamic growth towards the full "reintegration of unity" in the one Body.

Instead, they seem to acquiesce in the continuance, at least on this side of the city of God, of evangelical Protestantism and Roman Catholicism as two "linguistic systems," which are at once partially compatible and incommensurable.

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Ordinary Idols

Death of an Ordinary Man: A Novel
By Glen Duncan
Grove. 320 pp. $13 paper.

Reviewed by J. A. Gray

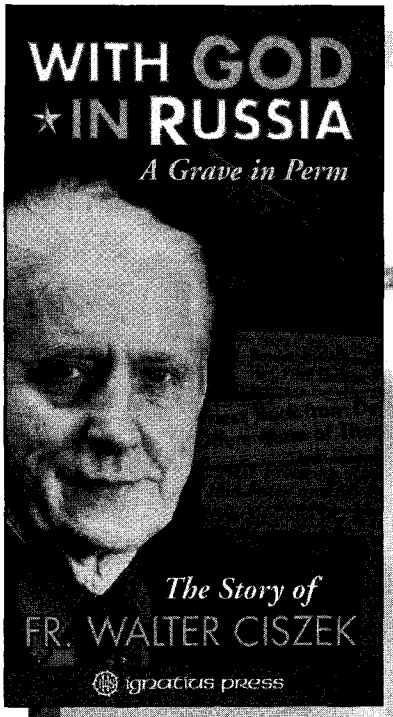
"As soon as the soul is set free from the body it is either plunged into hell or soars to heaven," wrote that doctor of the Church, St. Thomas Aquinas back in the thirteenth century, "unless it be held back by some debt, for which its flight must needs be delayed until the soul is first of all cleansed." This truth is now attested also by the manifest authority of England's Glen Duncan.

Death of an Ordinary Man is Duncan's novel about the delayed flight—or will it prove to be the delayed plunge?—of the soul of Nathan Clark, who in the opening pages comes to consciousness to find himself floating in mid-air above a churchyard. "The people he knew stood below him in negligible rain around a freshly dug grave." He sees family, friends, his whole circle. There is one ominous absence: himself. "Wait. Calm. List the facts. This is St. Xavier's. Exeter. Everyone. A grave." Mourners approach to toss upon the coffin their handfuls of earth. "He made himself take a moment, while the priest—Murray, whom he hadn't seen since Lois' christening—raised and lowered his arms like a tentatively worked marionette." The rain falls harder, and Nathan realizes that he cannot feel the drops. "Taking the moment to let in the obvious. His funeral."

Nathan does a hurried inventory: He is forty-eight years old, a secondary-school teacher of history, the father of three, a lapsed Catholic. But his evident death he cannot recall. As he watches himself being buried, he fishes for memories and unexpectedly hooks one that is far too heavy for his line: "They'd had Lois cremated. It hadn't needed discussion." Lois? The unbidden remembrance that his youngest child has preceded him in death "loomed up and darkened everything, like the shadow of a giant wave. He veered, wildly—"

Thus begins a strenuous afterlife, as Nathan steers his protoplasmic self clumsily above his burial and wake, peering down on conversations, buffeted by bolts of memory, trying to figure out what happened to him and to Lois. He can hear the unspoken thoughts of the living, a useful talent for a detective, but these psychic encounters grate upon his tender non-body and drain his meager energy. Nathan in death—invisible, inaudible, and lacking even the poltergeistic ability to rattle a teacup—is not much different from Nathan in life: a worried father and faithful hus-

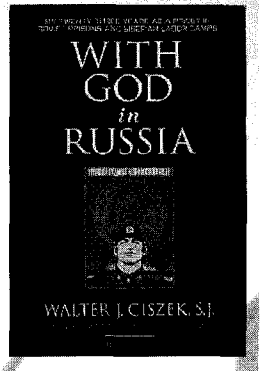
J. A. Gray, *formerly Associate Editor of* First Things, *is director of communications for the De La Salle Christian Brothers in Napa, California.*

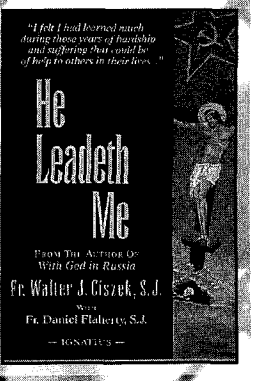


WELL KNOWN for his heroic story of surviving 23 years in Russian prison camps, Fr. Walter Ciszek was sent to Poland as a missionary in 1938. Caught between the Nazi invasion coming from the West and the Communist invasion coming from the East, he made his way into Russia, offering secret Masses for the oppressed Catholic population. But soon he was arrested by the KGB, accused of spying, and sent to the Gulag prison system in Siberia. For the next 12 years, there was no word of his whereabouts, or even if he was still alive.

It wasn't until 1963 that Fr. Walter Ciszek was finally allowed to go home to a country that he had not seen for 25 years. His incredible faith and trust in God have made an enormous impact on Catholics in Russia today.

The cause for Fr. Ciszek's canonization was opened in Rome in 1990, and continues to move forward.





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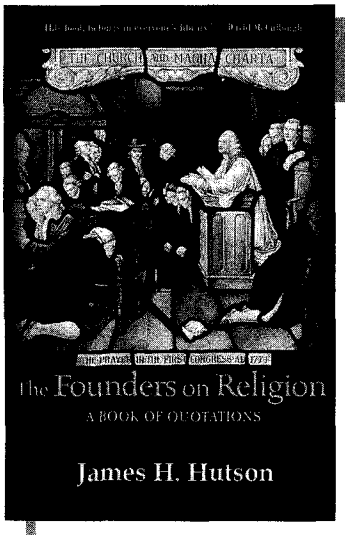
band, hovering awkwardly about the people he loves. As for the dead whom he has now presumably joined, "the billions," he sees none of them and senses none around him. "Shouldn't Lois be here? If this was. . . . He sent out a query. Lo? Nothing."

Broken sentences, shreds of thought, telegraphic phrases, sudden associations: The style that Duncan has created suits a fledgling ghost who is more spooked against than spooking. Following Nathan through his cautious but persistent endeavor to dispel his amnesia, we are treated to some excellent writing, as Duncan's prose makes almost palpable the attractions and repulsions that still bind poor flailing Nathan to the world of the living. Duncan's outstanding achievement, the heart of his book, is a long chapter (entitled "Claire") that takes us up to the crest of the novel: fifty pages of exemplary craftsmanship and wrenching emotion.

I WILL NOT spoil the surprise of the ending—any more than the author himself does. Duncan has written *Death of an Ordinary Man* so that every reader will twig to the facts long before the spectral Nathan can bring himself to confront them. The sad truths are these: Lois at age twelve was kidnapped, raped, and strangled; her killer is still unknown; her father's death, three years later, is self-inflicted. Gina, his eighteen-year-old daughter, ponders all this at the wake: "He'd had two modes: distress and denial. You needed more than that. If he'd turned his life into a quest to hunt down Lois' killer he'd have lived to be a hundred. Why didn't he do that?" Nathan, listening in, mutters, "Because I didn't have the strength. Sorry, angel. I wasn't strong enough."

Hence his suicide. But the novel is called *Death of an Ordinary Man*. Nathan's ordinariness, the author makes clear, consists in his utter contentment with being husband to Cheryl and father to Luke, Gina, and Lois, and in his lack of competing goals, professional or other. His wife Cheryl is, by contrast, discontentment on wheels, a would-be novelist of large ambition and small patience, a kitchen-table nihilist and suburban amoralist whose résumé includes adulteries that she has committed to "enlarge" herself. (On these affairs Nathan's policy is don't-ask-don't-tell.) "For Cheryl, the world had these huge potentialities, like gods who every now and then spoke to



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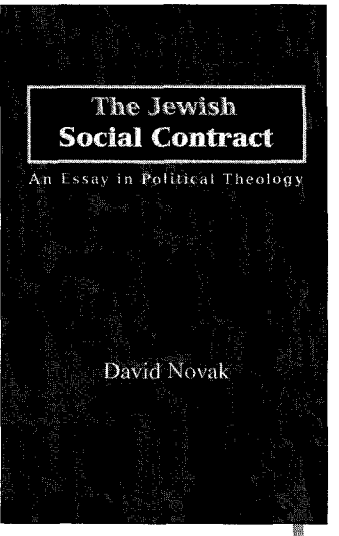

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her: Come here, let me show you what I could do for you. Nathan heard them, too, but for him they were false gods, and the one true god—love, his wife, his children—would suffer no false gods before it."

Duncan's own judgment of Nathan's household religion is nowhere stated, but his portrayal of its liturgies and its works makes it seem a distinctly unfruitful idolatry. Spouses who make idols of their spouses and parents who make idols of their offspring risk having their gods fail when tested; and what test could be more severe than the untimely or violent death of a child? "Nathan and Cheryl are each other's curse since the loss of Lois," we read. Duncan dramatizes so convincingly the predictable pathologies of bereaved parents that he raises, whether intentionally or not, this deep question: Has the determinedly ordinary family man cut himself off from the only spiritual resources that might enable him and his family to survive the horror of a child's death? Can life be successfully ordinary if it is not anchored in the extraordinary? It was some such question that Yahweh posed to Job in their long-ago grief-counseling session.

The wife's moral outlawry serves the family no better than the husband's idolatry does. Back in their cannabis-enhanced student days, when Nathan quoted to her Martin Niemöller's post-Dachau dictum, "they came for the Jews, but I wasn't a Jew, so I did nothing," Cheryl listened and then memorably responded, "No one left when they come for me? It's a deal. Just don't bother me in the meantime."

But this sort of bargain with reality is one that reality will seldom honor. It will come for you, as it has come for Cheryl, where you least expect it—for instance, through the murder of your daughter—and will expose your hard-eyed realism as sentimental fantasy. Thus exposed, Cheryl has retreated from her family and from her writing into an armored acquisitiveness in a big new corporate job.

Duncan's notable earlier novel was *I, Lucifer*, a first-person apologia by the prince of darkness. Thus one might have expected to find this technically Catholic family at least tempted by, and struggling against, the traditional consolations of religion. But no. Christianity is not even properly a background to the book. Catholicism gets a minor nasty personification in Nathan's narcissistic old dad, the Clark children spend a moment or two in some half-hearted Chris-

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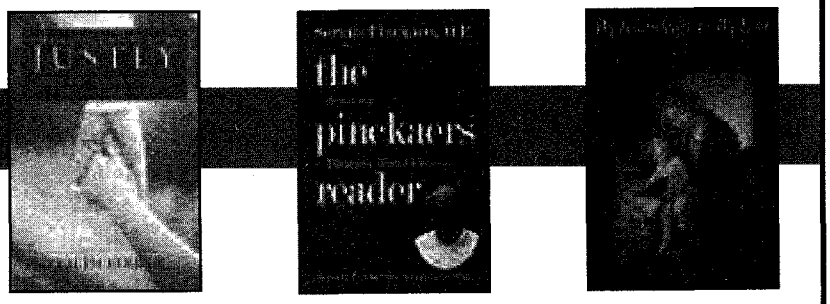

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tianity-baiting, and with that Duncan seems to be satisfied. Why, then, were the children baptized? Why is Nathan buried in the graveyard of the parish he never attends? No hint is given. Nor is the reader given any description of the funeral service in the church (a Mass?), since the author brings Nathan awake only when the funeral party has moved to the graveyard. (In his interment, at least, Nathan is out of the ordinary: only about three out of ten English corpses are returned to the earth these days; most are cremated.)

Must we accept the personable but pitiable Nathan Clark as the everyman from Exeter, the garden-variety Englishman in this post-everything age? If so, God help us, everyone. He is intellectually and professionally sterile, acknowledges no relationship with any higher or lower power; he is yoked in marriage to a moral idiot and has no siblings or other extended family to whom to look for sympathy and support.

He does have one male friend, Adrian, but Adrian's principal contribution to Nathan's life is an enduring wish to have sex with Nathan's wife. That wish is fulfilled one summer morning when Nathan is away from home. Nathan returns unexpectedly to find Cheryl and Adrian in the bedroom, sitting half-naked in bleak post-coital torpor. "Why have we done this?" Adrian is asking. "Because I collect perversions," Cheryl replies. That afternoon, Nathan slits his wrists.

By the end of the novel Nathan has indeed paid a debt, if only to himself, and he has been somewhat cleansed, at least of some taint of cowardice. "He went looking for Lois," says his daughter Gina. She is right, though neither she nor Nathan seems to wonder whether committing the sin of suicide is the best path to reunion with the innocent soul of a slaughtered daughter. Nonetheless, Nathan, in the first day of his post-interment career, has shown courage and resolution and has faced some crucial facts. Apparently this stage is over. He is confronted now with two choices that palely manifest themselves on opposite sides of a dark room. One is a white bed with the covers invitingly turned back. The other is a white door, firmly closed but with a prominent brass knob. "If I go through the door, will Lois be there?"

No answer comes. "Still fighting off sleep and wondering how, exactly, he was expected to get it open, Nathan moved towards the door." As Nathan heads deeper into his

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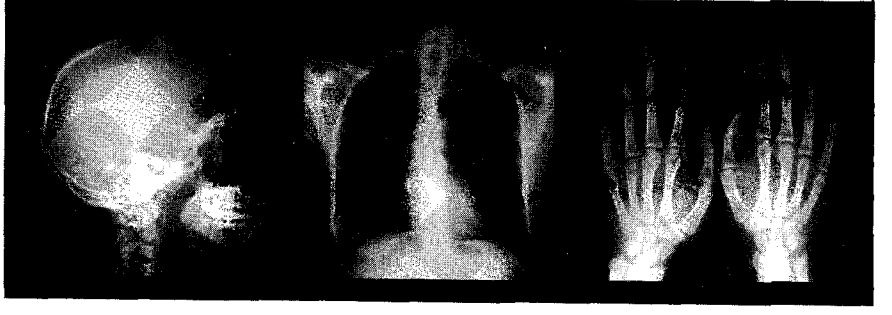

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afterlife, no reader will fail to wish him well.

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American Apocalypse

AN ANGEL DIRECTS THE STORM: APOCALYPTIC RELIGION AND AMERICAN EMPIRE
By MICHAEL NORTHCOTT
I.B. Tauris. 220 pp. $35.

GOD'S POLITICS: WHY THE RIGHT GETS IT WRONG AND THE LEFT DOESN'T GET IT
By JIM WALLIS
HarperSanFrancisco. 416 pp. $24.95.

Reviewed by Daniel Johnson

IN THE EYES of secular Europeans, Christianity is an American disease. And in the eyes of European Christians, secularism is an American disease, too. In reality, both Christianity and secularism came to America, like most other things, from Europe. The difference is that in America Christianity is vigorous enough to fight for its corner in the public square, whereas in Europe Christianity has largely been driven out of public life. The readiness with which invocations of the Almighty spring to the lips of American statesmen arouses cynicism and a kind of atavistic fear among those who attribute imperialist ambitions to the United States.

The one group of Europeans who might be expected to take a more balanced view of God's own country are those whose profession and vocation it is to know what can be known of God. I mean, of course, the theologians. Michael Northcott, who teaches Christian Ethics at Edinburgh University and has written books on environmentalism and global debt, is the very model of a modern theologian. He begins his latest, *An Angel Directs the Storm: Apocalyptic Religion and American Empire*, by establishing his creden-

DANIEL JOHNSON *has been a senior editor and columnist for the London* Times *and* Daily Telegraph. *He now writes a weekly column for the* New York Sun.

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tials as an informed and unprejudiced critic of the United States: "I first flew to JFK to join my family in Connecticut in the summer of 1969 when Americans first walked on the moon."

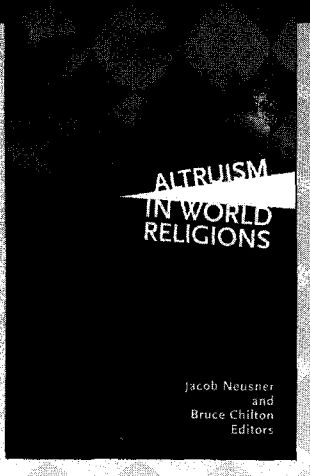
Northcott uses his American connections, however, to make common cause with American critics of the Bush administration, including not only Christians such as Stanley Hauerwas but also the anti-Christian Michael Moore and the neo-Marxists Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. But Northcott's critique of the United States from a European perspective goes far beyond its indigenous American counterparts. *An Angel Directs the Storm* does not merely caricature but demonizes the United States. The book depicts the American republic as an evil empire, driven to global conquest by an apocalyptic religion that has more in common with fundamentalist Islam than with biblical Christianity.

Northcott's political argument is based on the evolution of American eschatology: the perversion of the faith of the pilgrim fathers into the militant ideology of the Christian Right, which he characterizes as "premillennialist dispensationalism." On this account, the postmillennial American religion of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, which held that the idea of a promised land was already close to being realized in the United States, has been replaced by a rival premillennial form of evangelical Protestantism, based on apocalyptic expectation that the last days are imminent. Northcott claims that the original optimistic vision of America as a moral force in world affairs has given way to a grimly pessimistic fatalism, in which American self-interest is the only thing that matters. If the end of the world is nigh, all attempts to improve it are pointless. The "dispensation" granted by God to true believers means that they will be saved before the terrors of the apocalypse.

Northcott attributes even neoconservatism, an essentially secular strain of thought, to the fading of the messianic dream of a better world and its replacement by premillennial dispensationalism. He traces a line of descent from Locke's "theology of property," via Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, and Leo Strauss, to the market-driven imperialism of George W. Bush.

"The U.S. corporate elite," he claims, "increasingly see themselves as engaged in a planetary war for the maintenance of their own prosperity

CONTEXT AND CHANGE



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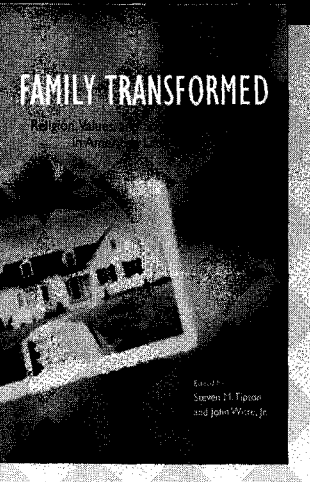

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and way of life, and for the directing of all human history to American ends." Christian Zionism, too, driven by the belief that the Jews must return to Israel before the prophecies of Revelation can be fulfilled, fits into Northcott's scheme of an "American apocalypse."

Northcott takes his title from a quotation used by President Bush in his inaugural address: the eighteenth-century Virginian statesman John Page, who asked Jefferson after the Declaration of Independence: "Do you not think an angel rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm?" Northcott contrasts this expression of faith—that "God was on the side of the underdog, the small emergent communities of the new America in their long struggle to overthrow imperial power"—with Bush's words on the USS *Lincoln*, when he declared victory in the war against Saddam Hussein: "The freedom you defend is the right of every person and the future of every nation. The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world; it is God's gift to humanity."

Northcott interprets the president to mean that "God is now on the side not of the weak but of the strong." But Bush's words are entirely consistent with the sentiments of Page and the other founders of the republic, or for that matter the pilgrim fathers. It is precisely because the United States is now by far the strongest military and economic power on earth that the president was at pains to emphasize his humanitarian intentions—internationalist altruism, not national egotism.

Liberty is a universal right, not an exclusively American one. In using a theological vocabulary, he was doing exactly what his predecessors, from Washington onwards, have always done. They, too, saw the republic and its military forces as "the servants of God's purposes in history not just for America but for the world." Northcott is just factually mistaken to draw a sharp contrast between past and present rhetoric.

The rest of Northcott's tract is devoted to proving that the war on terror and the "warrior ethos" of Bush's America are at odds with biblical Christianity. This is more conventional stuff, and much of the argument is familiar from the controversies that accompanied the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Reconciling the teachings of Jesus Christ with the necessity of war has never been easy, and it was no easier for ancient Rome and Jerusalem than it is for America

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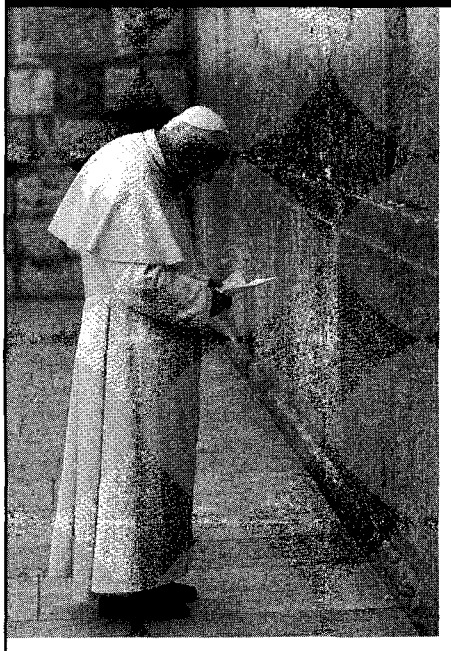

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today. But George W. Bush would subscribe wholeheartedly to St. Augustine's classical definition of the just war: "Peace should be the object of your desire; war should be waged only as a necessity, and waged only that God may by it deliver men from the necessity and preserve them in peace.... Let necessity, therefore, and not your will, slay the enemy who fights against you. As violence is used towards him who rebels and resists, so mercy is due to the vanquished or the captive, especially in the case in which future troubling of the peace is not to be feared."

Northcott would not, of course, regard Augustine as any sort of authority, for he condemns not only the warrior ethos, but the whole "Constantinian" settlement, the "religion of empire," of which Augustine was perhaps the greatest ornament.

He contrasts the "Jeremaniac model," to which he believes early Christians and the Jews of the Diaspora were faithful, with the reincarnation of the Roman Empire that he sees in the United States. Though he castigates First Things for using the phrase "hugging terrorists" and insists that only Christian pacifists are "taking violence and evil as seriously as God took them," Northcott makes scarcely any attempt to explain how civilization is to resist its enemies without using force.

It is perhaps unfair to expect Northcott to have given thought to any of the following questions, but I shall ask them anyway. Why, if America is such a diabolical creation, does this nation repeatedly generate from within its own supposedly benighted depths such powerful movements of reform, altruistic impulses, signs of contradiction that illuminate not only domestic but global iniquities? How, if the "American Empire" is the source of conflict and oppression, can it also have rescued Europe three times in a century from its own incomparably more belligerent and oppressive regimes? Where, if not to America, have the opponents of tyranny looked for refuge, inspiration and support, ever since the republic first gained its independence? Who, if not the United States, is able or willing to preserve the peace and prosperity of the world, through an unprecedented network of multilateral alliances, organizations, and treaties? What, if not a *pax Americana*, is to prevent a resurgence in the twenty-first century of the same forces and ideologies that made the twentieth century the bloodiest in history? And whose, if not America's, is the manifest destiny to defend the rights of man, and especially woman, against the latest of several Islamic jihads to be launched against the West, the last of which ended with the siege of Vienna more than three centuries ago?

If Northcott had wanted to examine American Christianity as it really is, he could have done worse than to read Jim Wallis' *God's Politics*. The author is a well-known evangelical preacher, columnist, and broadcaster who founded the Sojourners network and the Call to Renewal lobby group.

He was once close to George W. Bush, and claims that at a meeting in December 2000 the newly elected president said to him: "I've never lived around poor people. I don't know what they think. I'm a white Republican guy who doesn't get it. How do I get it?" Wallis replied: "You need to listen to the poor and those who live and work with poor people." Bush later included an echo of this exchange in his inaugural address: "Many in our country do not know the pain of poverty, but we can listen to those who do."

These days Wallis is no longer invited to the White House, and his book argues that neither Republicans

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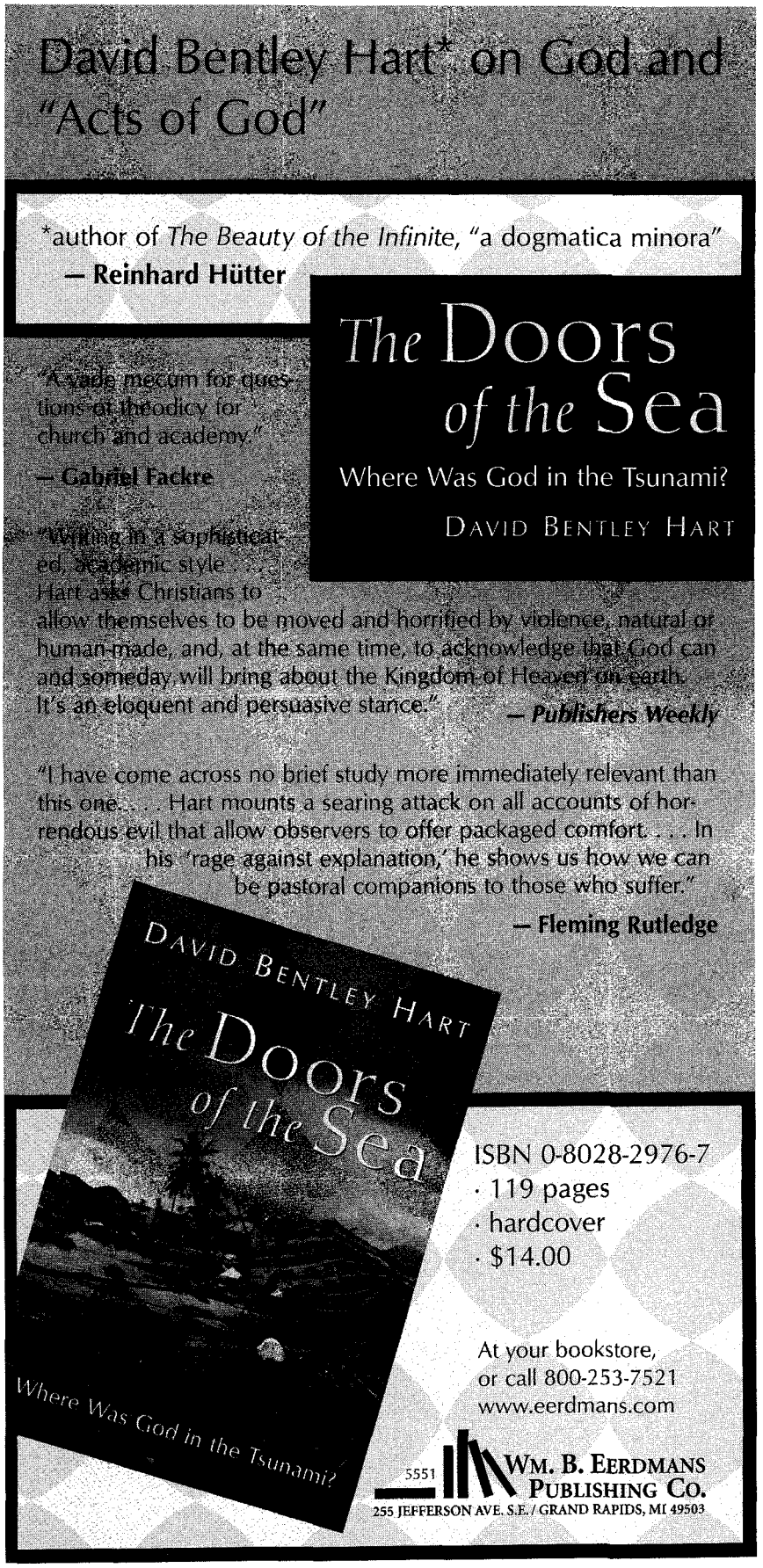
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nor Democrats have a monopoly of Christian truth. It's not a particularly profound book—it reads like the amalgam of newspaper columns that it presumably is—but a cheerful sincerity shines through that is about as remote as possible from Northcott's sinister evocation of American evangelism.

Wallis believes that all people of goodwill—liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans, Protestants and Catholics, Christians and atheists—can find common ground. "Neither religious nor secular fundamentalism can save us, but a new spiritual revival that ignites deep social conscience could transform our society," he writes.

The trouble with Wallis' approach is that it can easily resolve itself either into motherhood-and-apple-pie or into the kind of well-meaning internationalism that has no purchase on those prepared to use force. Thus Wallis seems to spend much of his inexhaustible energy trying to persuade Israelis to give up their land to Palestinian terrorists, or persuading Tony Blair to abandon his support for George W. Bush over Iraq.

Wallis loves the "new Marshall Plan" for debt relief in Africa proposed by the British chancellor of the exchequer, Gordon Brown, precisely because it is vacuous enough to accommodate everyone's aspirations. In short, Wallis is naïve and gullible in the way that only American evangelicals can be.

But though his good intentions are by no means incapable of leading to Hell, they are certainly not demonic. If a man like Wallis can have as large a following as he and others like him undoubtedly do, then Northcott cannot be right—not even remotely so—that the United States is a force for evil in the world, let alone that its president is the kind of Antichrist Northcott supposes George W. Bush to be.

Political theology is far too dangerous to be left to the theologians.

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Development or Reversal?

A Church That Can and Cannot Change: The Development of Catholic Moral Teaching
By John T. Noonan, Jr.
University of Notre Dame Press
280 pp. $30.

Reviewed by
Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J.

Doctrinal development follows a different course in social ethics than in the realm of revelation. The formulation of revealed truth develops through the discernment of new truths that are formally implicit in the apostolic deposit. Such truths, once proclaimed by the Church as divinely revealed, are dogmas and must be held by all as matters of divine and Catholic faith. Social teaching, on the other hand, consists of behavioral norms for social conduct in conformity with the gospel. While the principles remain constant, the proximate norms are not free from contingency because society itself is in flux. Specific regulations rarely have the universal and permanent character that belongs to dogma. Development in social teaching is not simply a matter of articulating what was always implicitly taught but a way of applying the teaching to new social situations.

Pope John Paul II noted the interplay of continuity and change in several of his social encyclicals. In the 1987 *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, for example, he declared that the Church's teaching in the social sphere exhibits both permanence and constant renewal: "On the one hand it is *constant*, for it remains identical in its fundamental inspiration, in its 'principles of reflection,' in its 'criteria of judgment,' in its basic 'directives for action,' and above all in its vital link with the Gospel of the Lord. On the other hand, it is ever *new*, because it is subject to the necessary and opportune adaptations suggested by the changes in historical conditions and by the unceasing flow of the events which are the setting of the life of people and society."

John T. Noonan, Jr., an accomplished scholar in the history of law and ethics and a distinguished federal judge, has devoted several decades of his life to studies in this complex area. He has published noteworthy books on contraception, abortion, usury, bribery, religious freedom, and the power of the Holy See to dissolve marriages. His latest, *A Church That Can and Cannot Change*, deals primarily with slavery, but in later chapters he sets forth more briefly his views on usury, religious freedom, and divorce. The overarching thesis seems to be that in all these areas social change makes it possible for Christians to overcome the blindness that had previously afflicted their moral vision. The doctrinal change, in Noonan's estimation, is in many cases an about-face, repudiating the erroneous past teaching of the magisterium itself.

More than half of the book deals with slavery, a subject that Noonan has researched in considerable detail. Slavery was practiced by almost every known society until modern times. Throughout the biblical era, Noonan shows, slavery was taken as a given, although the Israelites practiced rather mild forms of slavery and did not permanently enslave their compatriots. Jesus, though he repeatedly denounced sin as a kind of moral slavery, said not a word against slavery as a social institution. Nor did the writers of the New Testament. Peter and Paul exhort slaves to be

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obedient to their masters. Paul urges Philemon to treat his converted slave Onesimus as a brother in Christ. While discreetly suggesting that he manumit Onesimus, he does not say that Philemon is morally obliged to free Onesimus and any other slaves he may have had.

For many centuries the Church was part of a slave-holding society. The popes themselves held slaves, including at times hundreds of Muslim captives to man their galleys. Throughout Christian antiquity and the Middle Ages, theologians generally followed St. Augustine in holding that although slavery was not written into the natural moral law it was not absolutely forbidden by that law. St. Thomas Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin were all Augustinian on this point. Although the subjection of one person to another (*servitus*) was not part of the primary intention of the natural law, St. Thomas taught, it was appropriate and socially useful in a world impaired by original sin.

The leaven of the gospel gradually alleviated the evils of slavery, at least in medieval Europe. Serfdom did not involve the humiliation and brutality people today ordinarily associate with slavery. Moral theologians recognized that slaves, unlike mere chattels, had certain rights even against their masters, who no longer had over them the power of life and death, as had been the case in pagan antiquity.

For St. Thomas, slaves (*servi*) had the right to food, sleep, marriage, and the rearing of their children. Provision had also to be made for them to fulfill their religious duties, and they were to be treated with benevolence. With the conquest of the New World and the enslavement of whole populations of Indians and Africans, theologians such as Bartolomé de Las Casas and Cajetan began to object to the injustices of subjecting conquered peoples and of engaging in the lucrative slave trade. Some prominent Catholics of the early nineteenth century, including J.M. Sailer, Daniel O'Connell, and the Comte de Montalembert, together with many Protestants, pressed for the total abolition of slavery.

Throughout this period the popes were far from silent. As soon as the enslavement of native populations by European colonists started, they began to protest, although Noonan gives only a few isolated examples. Eugene IV in 1435 condemned the enslavement of the peoples of the newly colonized Canary Islands and, under pain of excommunication, ordered all such slaves to be immedi-

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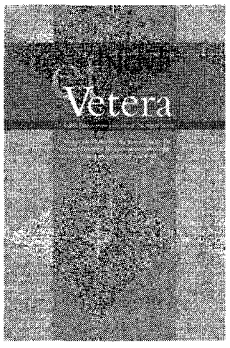

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ately set free. Pius II and Sixtus IV emphatically repeated these prohibitions. In a bull addressed to all the faithful of the Christian world Paul III in 1537 condemned the enslavement of Indians in North and South America. Gregory XIV in 1591 ordered the freeing of all the Filipino slaves held by Spaniards. Urban VIII in 1639 issued a bull applying the principles of Paul III to Portuguese colonies in South America and requiring the liberation of all Indian slaves.

In 1781 Benedict XIV renewed the call of previous popes to free the Indian slaves of South America. Thus it was no break with previous teaching when Gregory XVI in 1839 issued a general condemnation of the enslavement of Indians and Blacks. In particular, he condemned the importation of Negro slaves from Africa. Leo XIII followed along the path set by Gregory XVI.

Although the popes condemned the enslavement of innocent populations and the iniquitous slave trade, they did not teach that all slaves everywhere should immediately be emancipated. At the time of the Civil War, very few Catholics in the United States felt that papal teaching required them to become abolitionists.

Bishop John England stood with the tradition in holding that there could be just titles to slavery. Bishop Francis P. Kenrick held that slavery did not necessarily violate the natural law. Archbishop John Hughes contended that slavery was an evil but not an absolute evil. Orestes Brownson, while denying that slavery was *malum in se*, came around to favor emancipation as a matter of policy.

In 1863 John Henry Newman penned some fascinating reflections on slavery. A fellow Catholic, William T. Allies, asked him to comment on a lecture he was planning to give, asserting that slavery was intrinsically evil. Newman replied that, although he would like to see slavery eliminated, he could not go so far as to condemn it as intrinsically evil. For if it were, St. Paul would have had to order Philemon, "liberate all your slaves at once." Newman, as I see it, stood with the whole Catholic tradition. In 1866 the Holy Office, in response to an inquiry from Africa, ruled that although slavery (*servitus*) was undesirable, it was not per se opposed to natural or divine law. This ruling pertained to the kind of servitude that was customary in certain parts of Africa at the time.

No Father or Doctor of the Church, so far as I can judge, was an unqualified abolitionist. No pope or council ever made a sweeping con-

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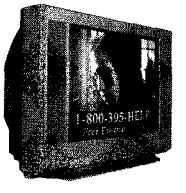

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demnation of slavery as such. But they constantly sought to alleviate the evils of slavery and repeatedly denounced the mass enslavement of conquered populations and the infamous slave trade, thereby undermining slavery at its sources.

In *A Church That Can and Cannot Change*, Noonan gives only a few glimpses of this complex history. He correctly notes that the Catholic magisterium in past centuries never made an absolute condemnation of slavery as such. But he contends that John Paul II reversed the traditional teaching. In support he quotes a statement of John Paul II in 1992. Speaking at the infamous "House of Slaves" on the Island of Gorée in Senegal, from which innumerable slaves had been exported, he declared: "It is fitting to confess in all truth and humility this sin of man against man, this sin of man against God." Noonan adds: "What this confession did not remark was how recently the sin had been discovered." But if we look up the quotation, we will find that the pope is here speaking of the slave trade, which had repeatedly been condemned. Far from changing the doctrine, John Paul is explicitly reaffirming the position of Pope Pius II, whom he quotes as having declared in 1492 that the slave trade was an enormous crime, *magnum scelus*.

Noonan has one further argument for doctrinal change. In 1993, in his encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, John Paul II took, from Vatican II's pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world, a long list of social evils: "homicide, genocide, abortion, euthanasia and voluntary suicide . . . *mutilation, physical and mental torture* and attempts to coerce the spirit; whatever is offensive to human dignity, such as sub-human living conditions, arbitrary imprisonments, deportation, slavery, prostitution and trafficking in women and children; degrading conditions of work which treat laborers as mere instruments of profit, and not as free responsible persons." Where Vatican II had called these practices "shameful" (*probra*), John Paul II calls them "intrinsically evil." In the same encyclical the pope teaches that intrinsically evil acts are prohibited always and everywhere, without any exception.

Did John Paul II, by including slavery in his list of social evils, effect the revolution in Catholic moral theology that Noonan attributes to him? It seems to me that if he had wanted to assert his position as definitive he would have had to say more

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clearly how he was defining slavery. He would have had to make it clear that he was rejecting the nuanced views of the biblical writers and Catholic theologians for so many past centuries. If any form of slavery could be justified under any conditions, slavery as such would not be, in the technical sense, intrinsically evil.

According to the logic of Noonan's argument, whatever holds for slavery would have to be said for deportations, subhuman living conditions, and degrading conditions of work. But could not degrading or subhuman conditions be inevitable, for example, after some great natural disaster in which mere survival is an achievement? Individual deportations of undesirable aliens occur continually as a matter of national policy today; mass deportations could perhaps be necessary for the sake of peace and security. If pressed, I suspect, the pope would have admitted the need for some qualifications, but he could not have specified these without a rather long excursus that would have been distracting in the framework of his encyclical. So far as I am aware, he never repeated his assertion that slavery is intrinsically evil. Neither the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* nor the recent *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, in their discussions of slavery, speaks so absolutely.

For all these reasons Noonan's case for a reversal of doctrine is unconvincing. Jacques Maritain provided some helpful distinctions in his book *The Rights of Man and Natural Law*. Absolute bondage, he asserted, is opposed to natural law, considered in its primary requirements, and thus is never justifiable.

But certain attenuated forms of servitude, such as serfdom, are not opposed to natural law except in its secondary requirements or aspirations. These lesser forms of servitude, linked to collective life in a fallen world and to the painful aspects of human labor, cannot be eliminated except by degrees. As machinery and technology develop, servile labor becomes less necessary. With more sophisticated forms of economic and social organization, it becomes possible and indeed imperative to diminish servitude and to abolish slavery in the usual sense of the word. In the "new heavens" of the resurrection every form of servitude will disappear.

Maritain's flexible view of human rights, here applied to slavery, gives a needed correction to Noonan's posi-

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tion and clarifies what John Paul II probably had in mind. Radical forms of slavery that deprive human beings of all personal rights are never morally permissible, but more or less moderate forms of subjection and servitude will always accompany the human condition. The elimination of slavery, possible in our time, corresponds to a natural dynamism of the human spirit toward freedom and personal responsibility. The goal of full and uninhibited freedom, however, is an eschatological ideal never fully attainable within history.

In his fifteen-page section on usury Noonan presents quite fairly the interplay between moral teaching and the emergence of new economic systems. The biblical strictures on usury were evidently motivated by a concern to prevent the rich from exploiting the destitution of the poor. But when capitalists of early modern times began to supply funds for ventures of industry and commerce, the situation became different. Moralists gradually learned to place limits on the ancient prohibition, so as to allow lenders fair compensation for the time and expenses of the banking business, the risks of loss, and the lenders' inability to use for their own advantage what they had loaned out to others.

These concessions do not seem to me to be a reversal of the original teaching but rather a nuancing of it. The development, while real, may be seen as homogeneous. In view of the changed economic system the magisterium clarified rather than overturned its previous teaching. Catholic moral teaching, like contemporary criminal law, still condemns usury in the sense of the exaction of unjust or exorbitant interest.

Noonan's third case is religious freedom. Until modern times the primary subject of religion, normally speaking, was the social group rather than the solitary individual. Religion provided the moral and cultural framework in which the society functioned. The state professed a particular religion and expected the citizens to adhere to it, while making exceptions for certain minorities who were treated with varying degrees of tolerance. An attack upon the established religion was counted as a civil offense.

AND SO, FOR MOST OF its history, Christianity functioned within a social system in which civil authorities upheld the religion of the people. The expectation was that the state would support the true religion. The Second Vatican Council still teaches, in its "Declaration on Religious Freedom," that it is legitimate for the con-

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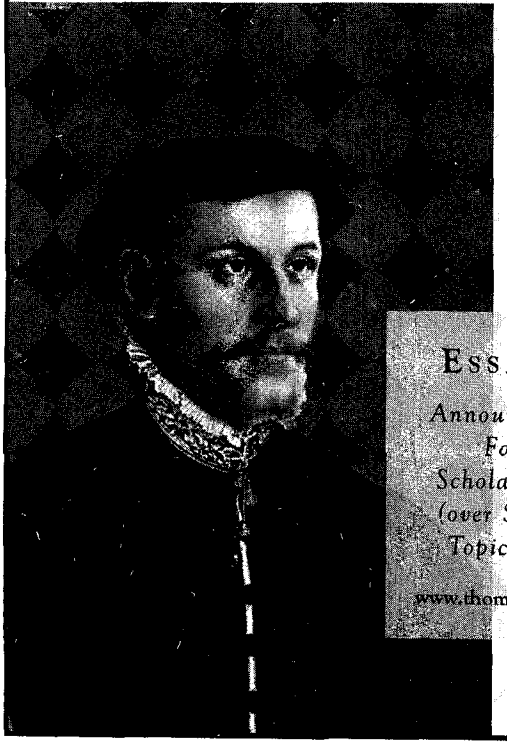
stitutional order of society to give special recognition to one religious body such as the Catholic Church.

In the nineteenth century liberal secularists appealed to the principle of freedom of conscience to justify a complete disregard for God and religion on the part of civil authorities. Liberalism promoted a secular or laicist society in which religion had no social standing and was reduced to a purely private matter. The "separation of Church and State," in this framework, would authorize the expropriation of parochial schools, the suppression of religious orders, and state control over the appointment of bishops and pastors—steps that were actually being taken in countries that followed the Jacobin leaders of the French Revolution. In that situation popes such as Gregory XVI and Pius IX condemned sweeping proclamations of the right to religious freedom. They were responding to militant anticlericalism; they were not addressing freedom of belief and expression as understood in American civil law. When denouncing the laicist concept of separation between Church and State, they did not have in mind the American system, which generally respects the freedom of the Church.

Still less were the popes rejecting the Church-State relation later approved by Vatican II in its declaration on religious freedom. Vatican II explicitly "leaves intact the traditional Catholic teaching on the moral obligation of individuals and societies toward the true religion and the one Church of Christ."

Nowhere does it suggest that there can be a right to hold or teach religious error. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, summarizing current Catholic doctrine, explains: "The right to religious liberty is neither a moral license to adhere to error, nor a supposed right to error, but rather a natural right of the human person to civil liberty, i.e., immunity, within just limits, from external constraint in religious matters by political authorities."

Noonan, arguing the case for a reversal, overlooks these important qualifications. As a historian he might be expected to situate documents like the *Syllabus of Errors* in their historical context, as he fails to do. His own interpretation of Vatican II is curiously similar to that of the reactionary Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, who went into schism because he thought of the council as a departure from the constant teaching the Church. While there has surely



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been a development of doctrine in this sphere, John Courtney Murray, one of Noonan's heroes, ended a lengthy article on the subject with the judgment: "The legitimate conclusion is that between Leo XIII and the Second Vatican Council there was an authentic development of doctrine in the sense of Vincent of Lerins, 'an authentic progress, not a change of the faith.'"

The change in teaching might be called, in the language of John Paul II, a "necessary and prudent adaptation." The Church has applied the unchanging principles of the right to religious freedom and the duty to uphold religious truth to the conditions of an individualist age, in which almost all societies are religiously pluralist. Under such circumstances the establishment of religion becomes the exception rather than the rule. But the principle of noncoercion of consciences in matters of faith remains constant.

The last section of Noonan's book deals with divorce. He does not here propose any change in the Church's teaching or practice with regard to consummated sacramental marriages, which are indissoluble. But he traces a progressive development in the Church's teaching about the possibilities of dissolving nonsacramental marriages.

From the time of St. Paul the "privilege of the faith" has been gradually expanded to include more and more cases. Noonan suggests that a new forward step would be for the Church to recognize all divorces of nonsacramental marriages granted by the civil courts.

It will be for moral theologians and canon lawyers to weigh this proposal. Although I cannot speak as a specialist in the field, I have my doubts. It seems to me that the teaching of the New Testament and the good order of society demand greater stability in marriages than the civil courts today ensure in the United States. For her own sacramental practice the Church has to decide in individual cases whether people are free to marry in the Church and participate in her life. These decisions require a moral judgment about whether the previous marriage was valid and whether it can or should be dissolved. I do not see how the Church can simply delegate this judgment to civil courts, which often grant "no-fault divorces" without reference to divine or natural law.

All in all, Noonan has written a stimulating book dealing with questions of great importance. He shows himself to be knowledgeable about the history of the four problems here treated. He brings to bear many of the skills of a historian, a civil lawyer, a canon lawyer, and to some degree those of a theologian. Anyone who wishes to question Noonan's conclusions must at least take account of the facts he has unearthed. He renders no small service in presenting the most powerful objections against continuity that can be raised.

The reader should be warned, however, that Noonan manipulates the evidence to make it seem to favor his own preconceived conclusions.

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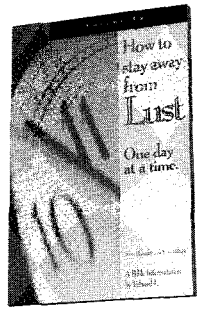

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For some reason, he is intent on finding discontinuity—but he fails to establish that the Church has reversed her teaching in any of the four areas he examines.

Briefly Noted

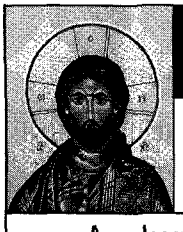
Sacred and Secular Scriptures: A Catholic Approach to Literature.
By Nicholas Boyle.
University of Notre Dame Press. 304 pp. $55.

In *Sacred and Secular Scriptures: A Catholic Approach to Literature*, the Cambridge literary scholar Nicholas Boyle hopes to find "some new ways in which some of the greatest modern literature . . . can speak to us about the relation of the modern world to God, about God's hiddenness and the revelation of the hiddenness, and about His reconciliation of our world to Himself through His Son and through His Son's mystical body, the Church." Boyle is highly critical of the main currents in secular modernity and of the biblical and literary scholarship under its sway. His own very Catholic theological sensibility draws him toward a redemptive reading of modern literature, one which takes its bearings from Holy Scripture. In response to the still-too-common assumption that Catholics are allergic to the Bible, Boyle emphasizes that a properly theological approach to modern culture and literature requires the integration of biblical wisdom with magisterial tradition. He argues that the Reformation's claim of *sola scriptura*—along with the subsequent development of aggressively Protestant scriptural study—led in the twentieth century to a biblical scholarship that "has pulsed away decoupled from the task of integrating theology and secular culture." Nicholas Boyle's own ambitious effort of reintegration does not entirely succeed; he is usually better at applying his hermeneutic theories than he is at formulating them for the reader. Still, this work does demonstrate the finer things that literary criticism can achieve when it seeks something of the divine in a body of writing that too many religious intellectuals and scholars have effectively abandoned to the high priests of secularism.

—Randy Boyagoda

Whose Bible Is It? A History of Scripture Through the Ages.
By Jaroslav Pelikan.
Viking. 288 pp. $24.95.

Readers of Jaroslav Pelikan's books are familiar with the vast erudition, subtlety of thought, and careful discernment he brings to the texts he studies. In addition to these qualities, his books are also typically marked by a clear prose style that makes them eminently accessible to the gen-



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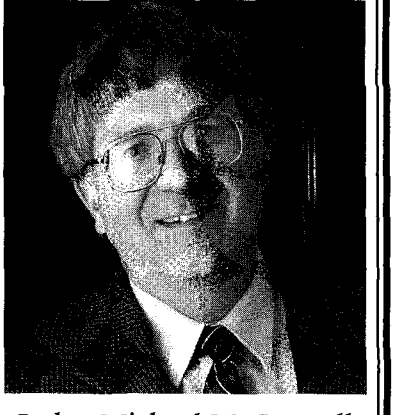

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eral reader; they are free of all jargon and scholarly obfuscation. Pelikan's new book, on the history of Scripture, continues on this same path. But the title, *Whose Bible Is It?*, suggests a bit more thematic unity than the book itself offers. The book opens with a vignette about three women—one Protestant, one Catholic, one Jewish—who want to buy Bibles for their daughters during the seasons of Passover and Easter (often the same week of the year). If they put their request to a clerk, the only appropriate response would be "Which Bible do you want?"—since different Bibles exist for Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. The book closes with a rhetorical flourish enjoining the reader to remember that the Jewish and Christian scriptures become vibrant testaments to a living God only when properly situated within the communities that preserved and transmitted them. "The Tanakh and the New Testament are agreed," the last sentence of this volume solemnly announces: "'What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.'" Yet the book fails to articulate this thesis in any explicit or consistent way. To be sure, all the data are there—Pelikan is a consummate historian and the book does not suffer from a lack of learning—but when I finished the last sentence of the volume I immediately realized that I would have to re-read it with pencil in hand if I wanted to see how the evidence related to the conclusion. That said, *Whose Bible Is It?* can still be recommended as a well-written and entertaining survey of twenty centuries of Jewish and Christian struggles to understand the Bible.

—Gary A. Anderson

Religious Ideology & Cultural Fantasy: Catholic and Anti-Catholic Discourses in Early Modern England.
By Arthur F. Marotti.
University of Notre Dame Press. 307 pp. $25.

In the past twenty years or so, a new generation of early modern historians has challenged the materialist interpretations of history that prevailed in the academy until the end of the 1970s. Among their other projects, these historians have tried to understand religion on its own terms, instead of as a superficial manifestation of purely material motivations. Arthur F. Marotti relies on many of the methods and assumptions of this newer scholarship in a cultural history of religious controversy in early

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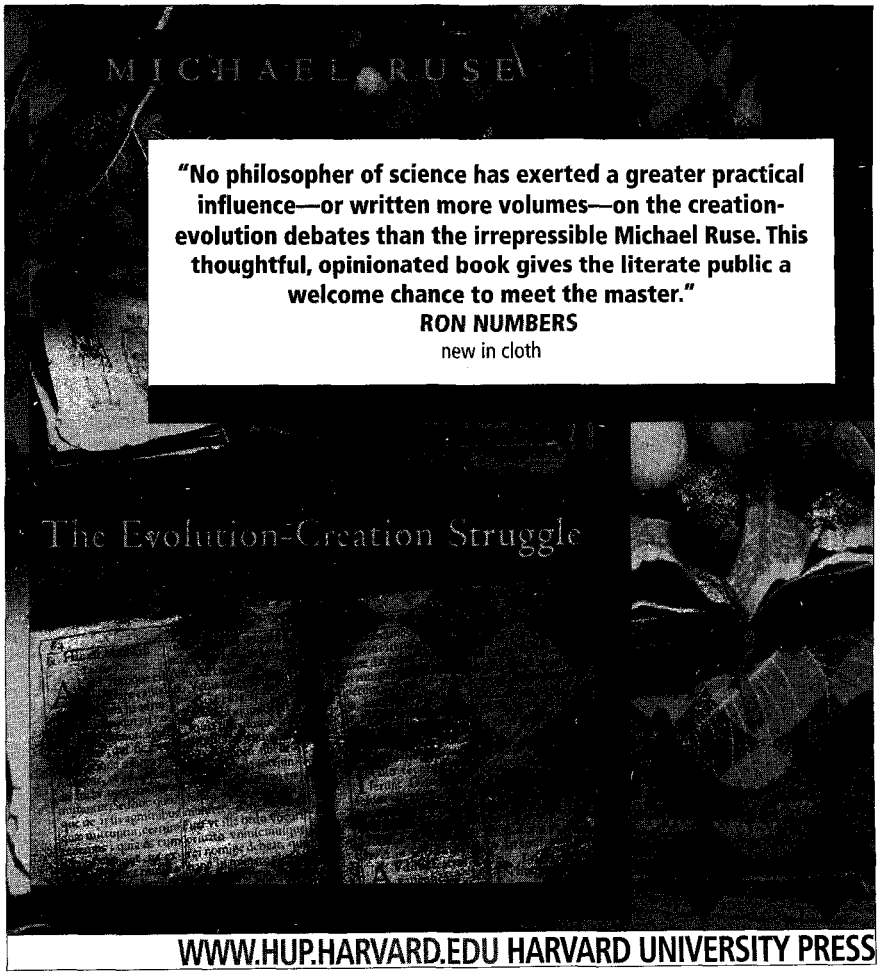
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modern England. Marotti attempts to show how Protestantism became a central feature of English identity—a development he charts from 1571, when the first Jesuits arrived in England, to the 1688 Glorious Revolution. He focuses on Protestant and Catholic pamphlet literature (the pop culture of the time), emphasizing how Protestants labeled Catholics as treasonous, untrustworthy, and foreign. Events such as the attack of the Spanish Armada and the 1604 Gunpowder Plot provided a model for what would become the "Protestant salvation history" of England: Foreign Catholics (first Spanish, then French) and their fifth column in England plot the destruction of the realm, but God graciously delivers Albion from its enemies. Gradually, English Catholics went from merely being despised as a superstitious minority to being feared as a distinctly foreign, anti-English menace. Marotti's well-researched account is convincing and informative, but it does not make for an especially compelling read. This is partly because of the book's scrupulously narrow focus. Marotti acknowledges that his treatment of the Catholic "discourses" is much shorter than his treatment of the Protestant ones—in fact, it is too short. And Marotti's book would have been more interesting to the non-specialist if the author had allowed himself a glance beyond the early modern period, to consider some of the long-term consequences of the animus he describes.

—Daniel Sullivan

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Despite the growth in Barth scholarship over the years, few have seriously challenged the fact that the best book about Barth was Hans Urs von Balthasar's *The Theology of Karl Barth*, a beautiful book, but one whose focus often seems as much on its author's views as on those of its subject. Balthasar's book is also limited by having been written when only portions of Barth's *Church Dogmatics* were completed; the most innovative and lasting of Barth's late insights were yet to emerge. But with this translation of Eberhard Busch's book, originally published in Germany in 1998, we now have available in English a genuinely great book devoted to understanding the entire body of Barth's work on its own terms. Busch was Barth's close friend and last assistant and is already renowned for his biography of Barth. This theological work confirms the author's reputation as a man of immense theological culture and as Barth's foremost interpreter. His knowledge of Barth's major and minor writings is unsurpassed, and the intelligent arrangement of the book masterfully combines large themes with intricate details. *The Great Passion* is a milestone in Barth scholarship.

—Matthew Rose

PRAYER: A HISTORY
By PHILIP and CAROL ZALESKI.
Houghton Mifflin. 416 pp. $28.

Prayer: A History by Philip and Carol Zaleski, frequent contributors to these pages, is a big and capacious book, interreligious and multicultural, surveying the ways in which human beings, historically and at present, give expression to their relationship with the transcendent. The authors are determinedly irenic but,

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Christians that they are, they give most attention—and the most informed and fetching attention—to the ways in which Christians and Jews pray. The theologically-minded will at points be made uneasy by a generic concept of prayer suggesting that Teresa of Avila, Navajo rain dances, Sufi dervishes, and Buddhist immolators of the self are all more or less engaged in the same practice called prayer. In this respect, the book reflects the problems of all studies in comparative religion, assuming a universal phenomenon into which experienced particularities are subsumed. Nonetheless, attentiveness to the observed practices and participant reflections on those practices that are universal or near-universal do suggest, for all the dissimilarities, a commonality that, for lack of a better term, the authors call prayer. The authors are for the most part reporters rather than analysts. The reader is left to judge whether, for instance, the ecstasies of the nineteenth-century Sri Ramakrishna are more like or unlike the revelations of the Little Flower, Thérèse of Lisieux. The book is enriched by extended quotations and eye-witness accounts. Here, for instance, is Thomas Merton reflecting on worship at the Abbey of Gethsemani: "The cold stones of the Abbey church ring with a chant that glows with living flame, with clean, profound desire. It is an austere warmth, the warmth of Gregorian chant. It is deep beyond ordinary emotion, and that is one reason why you never get tired of it. It never wears you out by making a lot of cheap demands on your sensibilities. Instead of drawing you out into the open field of feelings where your enemies, the devil and your own imagination and the inherent vulgarity of your own corrupted nature, can get at you with their blades and cut you to pieces, it draws you within, where you are lulled in

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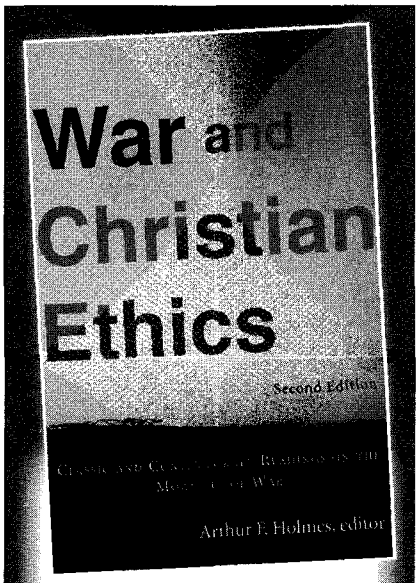

War and Christian Ethics, 2nd ed.
Arthur F. Holmes, editor
0801031133 • 416 pp. • $27.99p

"This new edition has the same judicious selection of classic texts on war and peace as the first edition, plus some well-chosen new texts that put the collection in the center of the current debate. Duane Friesen's article represents the new movement to take pacifism in the direction of peacemaking and raises provocative questions on the relation of policing to war. The debate between George Weigel and Rowan Williams addresses urgent questions of state responses to terrorism in the context of the ongoing conflict in Iraq. This book is ideal for classroom use and for anyone who wants to situate current debates within the full tradition of Christian thinking on war and peace."—**William T. Cavanaugh,** University of St. Thomas

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peace and recollection and where you find God." The Zaleskis' *Prayer: A History* does not make a lot of cheap demands on the reader's sensibilities—what a fine phrase to employ against the psychologizing of liturgy and imposed spiritual enthusiasm of every sort. Philip and Carol Zaleski are writing in conscious contrast to the 1930s classic, *Prayer: A Study in the History and Psychology of Religion*, by Friedrich Heiler, and they have little patience with modern demythologizers who pit "authentic" prayer against the "primitive" and "magical." The least satisfactory portion of *Prayer: A History* is the cursory treatment the Zaleskis give to "prayer in the public square." Indeed, at times they seem to tilt in the direction of a false pluralism—the sort of notion that suggests deep differences should make no public difference. Nonetheless, *Prayer: A History* is a significant achievement. The authors' learning and generosity of spirit will lead their readers into unfamiliar territory and reveal new depths in the familiar. The result is that one can only with difficulty escape the invitation and challenge to become more fully a person of prayer.

Democracy and Populism: Fear and Hatred.
By John Lukacs.
Yale. 244 pp. $25.

Over forty years ago, Father John Courtney Murray wrote, "Perhaps one day the noble many-storeyed mansion of democracy will be dismantled, leveled to the dimensions of a flat majoritarianism, which is no mansion but a barn, perhaps even a tool-shed in which the weapons of tyranny may be forged." Historian John Lukacs thinks the dismantling has been underway for a long time and looks for no help from a "conservatism" that is, in his view, nothing more than a vulgar mix of nationalism, populism, and militarism. He calls this book a jeremiad, and that it surely is. Looking around the ruins, he holds out the hope of "the Catholic Church being the last, embattled and tattered but, still, here and there visible, bastion and inspiration of personal integrity, decency, and, yes, of liberty and hope." This is not a book for faint hearts.

The Good Life.
By Charles Colson.
Tyndale. 394 pp. $24.99.

Charles Colson, undoubtedly one of the foremost evangelical Protestant figures of our time, here offers the stories of men and women who have discovered "the good life" in service

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to Jesus Christ. His own story of conversion and transformation gives further credibility to the arguments that he makes. Writing with Harold Fickett, Colson repeatedly underscores the ways in which hitting the bottom and teetering on the cusp of despair so often become the turning points toward what Jesus called "life and life abundant." The Christ-centered structure of Chuck Colson's book and its emphasis upon the support of a sustaining community of faith make it much more than just another entry in the genre of self-help spirituality.

A Different Jesus? The Christ of the Latter-Day Saints.
By Robert L. Millet.
Eerdmans. 226 pp. $16 paper.

A professor of religion at Brigham Young University presses the case that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Mormon church, is indisputably Christian in the most central affirmation of the person and redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Richard Mouw, president of the evangelical Fuller Theological Seminary, writes a most irenic foreword and afterword, stretching as far as he can to credit Professor Millet's argument. But in the end even Mouw is left wondering whether, Millet's sincere beliefs notwithstanding, the Jesus Christ of the Nicene Creed can be squared with, for instance, the Latter-day Saints' insistence that God is of the same species as humanity. While Millet's argument will not convince most orthodox or approximately orthodox Christians, it is a serious theological effort to bring Mormon belief and piety into conversation with historic Christianity. Some Mormons claim that their church is simply Christianity with "more." Christians of a "Bible only" persuasion, object to that more—and object strongly. Of course, they also object strongly to what they view as the "more" of

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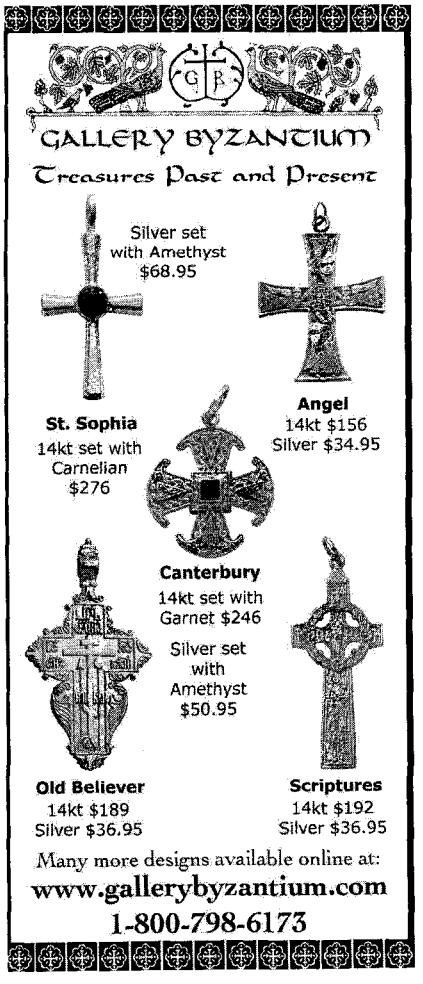
Catholicism and Orthodoxy. With Catholicism and Orthodoxy, however, it is more of the same, while the Mormons' "more" is manifestly a more of something very different. The discussion of whether and in what ways the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is and is not Christian will certainly continue, and it is the merit of this book to have elevated that discussion.

THE END OF TIME.
By DAVID HOROWITZ.
Encounter. 157 pp. $23.95.

The author is a political activist extraordinaire, first on the left and now for many years on the right. His book *Radical Son* is a classic of the "red-diaper baby" genre, recounting his tumultuous break with a world entranced by the Marxist "god that failed." The present book is, for the most part, very different. Writing after a life-transforming encounter with cancer, Horowitz reflects on the deep things of life's meaning and whether it is possible to make a difference that matters historically. Pascal figures prominently in his meditations. While he admires the master's humility and honesty, by the end of the book Horowitz still holds back from Pascal's faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. David Horowitz continues to live on the cusp.



THE TRUTH ABOUT TOLERANCE: PLURALISM, DIVERSITY, AND THE CULTURE WARS.
By BRAD STETSON and JOSEPH G. CONTI.
Intervarsity. 207 pp. $16 paper.

An extraordinarily lucid and persuasive laying out of the case that truth and tolerance are not in conflict. Indeed, the authors contend, tolerance is required by a commitment to truth. Aimed at Christians, and evangelical Protestants in particular, *The Truth About Tolerance* will greatly benefit all who worry, with reason, that the culture wars Stetson and Conti refer to in their subtitle could destroy civil society, dividing the United States into camps of unremitting hostility and mutual intolerance. Warmly recommended.

REASON AND THE REASONS OF FAITH.
Edited by PAUL J. GRIFFITHS and REINHARD HÜTTER.
T & T Clark. 373 pp. $49.95.

There is today a crisis of faith in reason, and a crisis of reason in faith. And, in complex ways, each crisis reinforces the other, or so argue the scholarly contributors to this valuable volume. Essayists include Alan J. Torrance, Bruce D. Marshall, Robert Jenson, David Bentley Hart, Romanus Cessario, and the editors themselves.

THE THIRD SPRING.
By ADAM SCHWARTZ.
Catholic University. 415 pp. $64.95.

The author teaches history at Christendom College and has put into very readable form his meticulously researched doctoral thesis on G.K. Chesterton, Graham Greene, Christopher Dawson, and the poet David Jones. John Henry Newman spoke of the "second spring" of Catholicism in Britain, and Schwartz suggests the many literary and intellectual converts of the twentieth century constituted a "third spring." They sought in Catholicism a solidly grounded alternative to what they viewed as a decadent secular culture. Those who lived to see the consequences of Vatican II feared that the solid ground was shifting. The argument offers no surprises but *The Third Spring* is an inviting introduction to figures of continuing interest.

THE BELOVED COMMUNITY.
By CHARLES MARSH.
Basic. 292 pp. $26.

The subtitle is "How Faith Shapes Social Justice, From the Civil Rights Movement to Today," and the author is director of the Project on Lived Theology at the University of Virginia. He writes that "if you are southerner, white, and Christian—and I am all of those—you owe the credibility of your faith to the courage and conviction of your black brothers and sisters." There is an important sense in which that may be true, but the author, whose rhetoric frequently overwhelms theological reflection, appears to mean that the truth of the Christian gospel is contingent upon its ability to effect, or at least bear witness to, radical social change. In any event, this book is a partial payment of his felt debt to black religion in the South. Like the recent and justly influential *A Stone of Hope* by David Chappell, *The Beloved Community* argues that the

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early civil rights movement, especially under the leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr., is inexplicable apart from the vibrant Christian faith of southern blacks. Marsh draws on the standard accounts of King and his leadership but also provides brief portraits of lesser known figures such as Clarence Jordan of Koinonia Farm, one of the more notable experiments in radical Christian community that contributed to a spiritual awakening in the South. While the writing is prosaic and the repeated jargon about "social gospel," "prophetic religion," and "solidarity with the poor" can be tedious, some readers may find contagious the author's fervent sincerity. The book is marred by streaks of mean-spiritedness toward those who, in Marsh's view, were not as clearsighted or courageous as his heroes. Yet *The Beloved Community* deserves a place in the still-growing library of books on the civil rights movement and related experiments in radical communitarianism.

The Doors of the Sea.
By David Bentley Hart.
Eerdmans. 109 pp. $14.

Shortly after the tsunami in Asia that may have killed more than 200,000 people, David Hart wrote a column in the *Wall Street Journal* which he then expanded as an opinion piece in these pages and has now greatly expanded as *The Doors of the Sea*. The title is from God's challenge to Job: "Who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth as if it had issued out of the womb?" Hart offers a scathing critique of both sentimental and rationalistic responses to evil that try to justify to man the ways of God. Among Christian rationalists, those of a Calvinist bent are most mercilessly dissected. The real question posed by the tsunami and all experience of evil, Hart contends, is that posed by Ivan in *The Brothers Karamazov*: Can we morally accept any vindication of God's justice that necessarily entails the existence of great evil? As an Orthodox Christian sympathetically engaged with the Catholic tradition of the West, David Bentley Hart contends that we can settle for nothing less than the fulfillment of eschatological promise in which the ultimate non-reality of evil will be decisively displayed in the triumph of Christ. This penetrating reflection is warmly recommended to those pondering "the problem of evil," whether out of intellectual curiosity or out of the depths of anguish occasioned by disasters cosmic or personal.

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

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IRAQ AND MORAL JUDGEMENT

Some readers have complained that FIRST THINGS, and I in particular, have had a great deal to say about just-war doctrine but relatively little to say about the application of that doctrine to the conflict in the Middle East. The reason is that just-war doctrine is central to the mission of the journal while military and geopolitical questions are not. Closely related to that, I have a measure of expertise in moral theology while on those other questions, as Will Rogers said, I only know what I read in the newspapers. To be more precise, what I read in the newspapers, opinion magazines, and academic journals, and learn from people better informed than I and in whose judgment I have confidence. Having said that, I do have some definite views on U.S. policy in the Middle East. Herewith an interview I did with ZENIT, the Rome-based news service, on March 10, 2003, shortly before the invasion of Iraq. Following the interview, I offer reflections on how the situation appears two and a half years later.

ZENIT: On whether there is a just cause for an attack against Iraq, many observers question if there is enough evidence of a direct connection between Baghdad and the September 11 attacks. Others doubt that there is clear evidence of an imminent attack of a grave nature by Iraq against other countries. What do you think?

RJN: First it must be said that—although it appears that military action against Iraq may be only a matter of days or weeks away—faithful Catholics are joined with the Holy Father John Paul II in fervent prayer that war may yet be avoided. As he has said, war represents a defeat of the right ordering of peace—what St. Augustine called *"tranquillitas ordinis."* In history nothing is inevitable, and with God all things are possible.

St. Thomas Aquinas and other teachers of the just-war tradition make it clear that war may sometimes be a moral duty in order to repel aggression, overturn injustice, and protect the innocent. The just cause in this case is the disarmament of Iraq, a cause consistently affirmed by the Holy Father and reinforced by 17 resolutions of the Security Council.

Whether that cause can be vindicated without resort to military force, and whether it would be wiser to wait and see what Iraq might do over a period of months or years, are matters of prudential judgment beyond the competence of religious authority.

In just-war doctrine, the Church sets forth the principles which it is the responsibility of government leaders to apply to specific cases (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2309). Saddam Hussein has for eleven years successfully defied international authority. He has used and, it appears, presently possesses and is set upon further developing weapons of mass destruction, and he has publicly stated his support for the September 11 attack and other terrorist actions.

In the judgment of the United States and many other countries, he poses a grave and imminent threat

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to America, world peace and the lives of innumerable innocents. If the judgment is correct, the use of military force to remove that threat, in the absence of plausible alternatives, is both justified and necessary. Heads of government who are convinced of the correctness of that judgment would be criminally negligent and in violation of their solemn oath to protect their people if they did not act to remove such a threat.

As a theologian and moralist, I have no special competence to assess the threat posed by Iraq. On the basis of available evidence and my considered confidence in those responsible for making the pertinent decisions, I am inclined to believe and I earnestly pray that they will do the right thing.

Strong objections have been raised to the concept of preventive or preemptive uses of military force to overthrow threatening regimes or to deal with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Is the use of preemptive force justified according to just war principles?

Frequent reference to preventive or preemptive use of military force, and even to "wars of choice," have only confused the present discussion. War, if it is just, is not an option chosen but a duty imposed. In the present circumstance, military action against Iraq by a coalition of the willing is in response to Iraq's aggression; first against Kuwait in 1991, then in defiance of the terms of surrender demanding its disarmament, then in support of, if not direct participation in, acts of terrorism. This is joined to its brutal aggression against its own citizens, and its possession of weapons of mass destruction which it can use or permit others to use for further aggression.

To wait until the worst happens is to wait too long, and leaders guilty of such negligence would rightly be held morally accountable. In the Catholic tradition there is, in fact, a considerable literature relevant to these questions. Augustine, Aquinas, Francisco de Vitoria, and Francisco Suarez, for example, all wrote on prudential action in the face of aggressive threats. The absence of reference to such recognized authorities in the current discussion among Catholics is striking.

Many voices within and outside the Church ask that the United States not go ahead with an attack [in Iraq] without specific UN authorization. Is UN approval just a prudential course of action, which could in the last resort be bypassed? Or is it obligatory, given the provisions of the UN charter and the growing importance of international institutions like the UN?

Resolution 1441 of the Security Council, unanimously approved last November, demands that Iraq immediately disarm or face the consequences. Nobody claims that Iraq has complied, and proposals for "extended timelines" and the like appear to invite no more than a repeat of the defiance of the past eleven years.

No further UN "authorization" is required. The larger and more interesting question is posed by the frequently heard assertion that the United Nations is the locus of legitimate authority in international affairs. That is asserted but it has not been argued, certainly not in terms of Catholic doctrine regarding legitimate authority. In view of the United Nations' frequent hostility to the Church on family policy, population, the sacredness of human life, and related matters, some Catholic leaders may come to regret their exaggerated and, I believe, ill-considered statements about the moral authority of the United Nations.

Moreover, if the United Nations is not prepared to support the enforcement of its own resolutions—resolutions which it cannot itself enforce—it is likely to go the way of the old League of Nations. The coalition led by the United States intends to act in support of the United Nations. If a minority on the Security Council rejects that support, the credibility and future usefulness of the United Nations will be gravely undermined.

There is a necessary connection between power and moral responsibility. Every nation acts and should act in its own interest, in the hope that interests can be coordinated to serve the common good. The United Nations has sometimes been useful toward that end. Many would understandably regret its self-inflicted diminishment or demise. But in its absence I expect that new institutions more attuned to the nexus of power and responsibility would emerge in order to coordinate national interests in the service of peace, never forgetting that peace as "tranquillitas ordinis" will always be sadly deficient short of Our Lord's return in glory.

On the question of proportionality, many fear that an attack could destabilize the Middle East and cause even greater hostility among Muslims. Others point to the high cost that civilians might pay, due to the precarious nature of life in Iraq. Is the United States giving sufficient weight to these dangers?

It is striking that the Bush administration has addressed the Iraq crisis with very specific reference to Catholic just war doctrine, including proportionality. Widespread statements in parts of Europe about American inexperience and "cowboy" impetuosity would be insulting were they not so adolescent. They are especially unbecoming when made by distinguished prelates associated with the Holy See.

To take but the last hundred years, the record of the United States in combating tyranny, defending free-

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dom, providing humanitarian aid, motoring economic development, and securing a modicum of world order compares very favorably with that of, for instance, Germany, France, Russia, or Italy.

You ask about possible consequences of military action, including Muslim reaction and civilian casualties. The simple answer is that such consequences are unknowable and therefore unknown, except to God. I know that possible consequences have been considered, day and night for many months, by competent parties. I know there is a determination to minimize damage to innocents, and a reasoned expectation that successful action will weaken Islamist enemies of civilization and strengthen the Muslim forces of decency and freedom. Nobody can know for sure what will happen.

Religious leaders should bring more to the public discussion than their fears. Nervous hand-wringing is not a moral argument. At this point, we should, with the Holy Father, be on our knees in prayer that Iraq will disarm without military action. If war comes, we must pray that a just cause prevails—quickly, with minimal damage to innocents, and with a long-term determination to help the Iraqi people then freed from a brutal tyranny.

The Church cannot bless this military action as though it were a Christian crusade. After the war, if there is to be a war, the Church, and the Holy Father in particular, will be indispensable as a dialogue partner in moving Islam away from the most ominously destructive possibilities of a "clash of civilizations."

In sum, military action in order to disarm Iraq can be morally justified in terms of just-war doctrine. Whether, in the retrospect of history, it will be viewed as a prudent course of action, nobody can know. If such action is undertaken, however, it seems to me that we have no moral alternative to praying that a just cause will prevail justly.

It is now more than two years since I gave that ZENIT interview, and the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq have not been found. Some say that they never existed, others that they are still hidden or were sent elsewhere, probably to Syria, when the invasion was imminent. I don't know, but for purposes of discussion let's say they did not exist at the time, even though it is known that Saddam used such weapons against his own people years earlier. The morally pertinent fact is that not only the United States but every major country's intelligence service—including those of Britain, France, and Germany—believed Saddam had or was very close to having weapons of mass destruction, and that was also the premise of the unanimous ultimatum of the Security Council in the fall of 2002. This may say a great deal about the competence of the intelligence services, but it says nothing about the moral legitimacy of the decision to disarm Saddam. A partial but pertinent analogy is a police officer who shoots a person who is shooting at him, only to discover that the suspect was using a toy capgun. Few would accuse the officer of responding inappropriately.

There has been considerable talk about the "Downing Street Memo" in which a British director of intelligence offered his opinion that the Bush administration was preparing to remove Saddam and was spinning intelligence to support that intention. He also said that Washington had no adequate plans for what would happen after an invasion. That is interesting, but I fail to see its relevance to the justice of the war. One expects the White House and the Pentagon to be planning for all kinds of contingencies. The implementation of such plans is another matter. The British official had the impression that the decision to implement had already been made in the summer of 2002. The Bush administration says the final decision was made only after Colin Powell's failed appeal to the United Nations in early February of 2003. I don't know. In world affairs, as in everyday life, decisions move back and forth from the possible to the probable to the definite. The gist of the memo, however, is that Washington did not do sufficient planning, especially with respect to the aftermath of invasion, and that may well be the case.

I listened to several hours of the rump hearings convened by Representative John Conyers and supported by leftward representatives such as Barney Frank, Maxine Walters, and Jerrold Nadler. They're calling for withdrawal from Iraq, and much was made of the Downing Street Memo, together with numerous conspiracy theories of the kind readily garnered from the Internet. It was show-and-tell time for what Richard Hofstadter once called the paranoid style in American politics. The administration is fortunate in its more strident critics. There are, to be sure, more thoughtful critics who deserve a careful hearing.

Opponents of U.S. policy continue to invoke John Paul II's opposition to the war, and I address that in the ZENIT interview. When in November 2003, 18 of the 3,000 Italian soldiers in Iraq were killed, the Holy Father condemned the "vile" act of the killers and said the soldiers were on "a mission of peace." In the days and weeks following, Camillo Cardinal Ruini, who is head of the Italian bishops' conference and was very close to the pope, sharply criticized pacifism and anti-Americanism and declared that the Church strongly supports the vision of a more free and just world. The Holy See hoped that war could be avoided, and when war came hoped for a just outcome. As noted also in

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these pages, after the coalition action in Iraq, the more strident curial voices of opposition were silenced or significantly muted.

Questions come hard and fast from many quarters. It was a mistake not to put more troops on the ground in the first place, some say. Instances of the torture of prisoners have been highlighted and officially acknowledged, and, one has reason to think, effectively addressed. Serious questions are raised about the indefinite detention of suspected terrorists. A great mistake was made, it is said, in disbanding the Iraqi army and excluding members of the Saddam regime from participation in a new government. And always the discussion returns to the more than 1,800 American soldiers killed, and to the question of how many more American lives and how many more billions of dollars will be exacted before the job is done. And to the question: How will we know when the job is done? Or are we in a permanent state of war?

A recent poll asks Americans: "All in all, considering the costs to the United States versus the benefits to the United States, do you think the war with Iraq was worth fighting or not?" Almost 60 percent said No. The benefits to the Iraqi people who have been liberated from a murderous regime that killed hundreds of thousands of people is quite another matter. And few would deny that the American-led demonstration of resolve is related to a movement toward decency and democracy in countries as various as Ukraine and Lebanon, with ripples of hopeful change in Egypt and even Iran and Syria. Has the action in Iraq checked or exacerbated radical Islam's war of terrorism against the West? For an answer, pick your experts. Exclude those who have a track record of contempt for Bush, along with his uncritical partisans, and the weight of opinion is that U.S. policy has made a difference for the better. On these questions I read very carefully Fouad Ajami of Johns Hopkins. Would bombings by Islamist radicals in Madrid, London, and elsewhere have happened without the invasion of Iraq? On the basis of the stated aims of those who sponsor such terrorist acts, there is reason to think so.

The question of whether any military action is "worth it" is hard to answer. How much is a human life "worth," whether American or Iraqi? *Sub specie aeternitatis*, every human life is of infinite value. In the calculus of temporal affairs, whether in war or in the designing of automobiles, the loss of lives is weighed against other goods. Many thought the American Civil War was not "worth it." There was and still is the judgment of some that American participation in World War II was not "worth it." The inevitable question is: What would have been the consequences of alternative policies? All agree that Saddam Hussein aimed, with the help of weapons of mass destruction, to dominate the Middle East. Had he succeeded, would we now or next year be fighting him under much more adverse circumstances? I don't know, but I know it is a legitimate question. About the contingencies of history, we make decisions on a postulate of ignorance.

The goal of U.S. policy is clear enough. Consider Bush's second inaugural. Whether one finds the soaring rhetoric inspiring or over the top, there is no doubt about the direction:

> We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world.
>
> America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one. From the day of our Founding, we have proclaimed that every man and woman on this earth has rights, and dignity, and matchless value, because they bear the image of the Maker of Heaven and earth. Across the generations we have proclaimed the imperative of self-government, because no one is fit to be a master, and no one deserves to be a slave. Advancing these ideals is the mission that created our Nation. It is the honorable achievement of our fathers. Now it is the urgent requirement of our nation's security, and the calling of our time.
>
> So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.
>
> This is not primarily the task of arms, though we will defend ourselves and our friends by force of arms when necessary. Freedom, by its nature, must be chosen, defended by citizens, and sustained by the rule of law and the protection of minorities. And when the soul of a nation finally speaks, the institutions that arise may reflect customs and traditions very different from our own. America will not impose our own style of government on the unwilling. Our goal instead is to help others find their own voice, attain their own freedom, and make their own way.
>
> The great objective of ending tyranny is the concentrated work of generations. The difficulty of the task is no excuse for avoiding it. America's influence is not unlimited, but fortunately for the oppressed, America's influence is considerable, and we will use it confidently in freedom's cause.
>
> We go forward with complete confidence in

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> the eventual triumph of freedom. Not because history runs on the wheels of inevitability; it is human choices that move events. Not because we consider ourselves a chosen nation; God moves and chooses as He wills. We have confidence because freedom is the permanent hope of mankind, the hunger in dark places, the longing of the soul. When our Founders declared a new order of the ages; when soldiers died in wave upon wave for a union based on liberty; when citizens marched in peaceful outrage under the banner "Freedom Now"—they were acting on an ancient hope that is meant to be fulfilled. History has an ebb and flow of justice, but history also has a visible direction, set by liberty and the Author of Liberty.

There you have it, the unfurling of the banners of idealism joined to the qualifications of realism, although, to be sure, not qualifications enough for some who call themselves realists. Recall Herbert Butterfield's observation that realism is not a school of thought but simply a boast. The address is a statement of national purpose in international affairs. Others are made nervous by the intimations of national mission and even destiny. But "the eventual triumph of freedom" is a hope; it is not America's task to achieve, and certainly not to achieve alone. The address simply declares that America is on the side of its achievement.

I have no doubt that President Bush is sincere, recognizing that his sincerity is precisely what frightens some of his critics. Not only in his speeches, and not only in the liberation of Afghanistan and Iraq in the past two years, but in very publicly receiving the victims of tyrannies, in bolstering diplomatic initiatives favoring democracy, and in numerous other ways, he has tried to underscore that America is on the side of "freedom's cause." But one may wonder whether it could ever really be the case that "America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one." One may wish it to be always the case and hope it to be ordinarily the case, while remembering St. Augustine's caution that politics, including politics among nations, is inescapably marked by *libido dominandi*, the lust for power, advantage, and glory. American exceptionalism does not extend to immunity from that truth.

There is the underlying assumption that what is good for America is good for the world. It is a pleasing thought, although not widely shared among those who are envious and resentful of America, and it is rudely rejected by anti-Americans, both foreign and domestic, who believe that what is good for America is bad for the world. Declared U.S. foreign policy under Bush has abandoned the lodestar of stability to follow freedom's moving star of change. The hope, of course, is that a world more free will be a world of greater security, also for America. As is frequently said, democracies do not go to war with one another, and it is frequently said because it is generally true.

In world affairs, as in human affairs more generally, somebody, or a cooperative of somebodies, has to take the lead. In the Vietnam era it was thought that the idea of America as "the world's policeman" had been thoroughly discredited. But where bad people are up to mischief and great wickedness, it is a very good thing to have a policeman on the beat. The image of policeman is quite modest. He has limited powers under the law to enforce the law. When there is no superior authority and he has accepted the task that is his by default, he must the more rigorously impose discipline and limits upon himself. It is necessary to have a policeman, and what other candidates are there? Europe? China? Russia? To ask is to receive the answer. The United Nations? To ask is to invite derision.

This does not mean the United States is Gary Cooper at high noon. For one thing, others may come to the nation's aid. More important, world affairs are not like a decisive shoot-out. There are numerous actors, interests, ambitions, and fears in play. It is a matter of deterring and enticing, punishing and threatening to punish, encouraging and rewarding—and doing it all at the same time. Former Secretary of State George Shultz was fond of saying that the conduct of world affairs is seldom a matter of choosing between war and peace. War and peace is not an on-off switch. It is more, he said, like sitting at the control panel of a hundred rheostats, applying or reducing power in order to achieve a measure of equilibrium. George W. Bush's addendum is that equilibrium must be decisively tilted toward democracy and freedom.

Even if one agrees with all or most of the above, it does not answer the question of Iraq. There are thoughtful people, both liberal and conservative, who think that regime change in Iraq was a disaster in both conception and execution, and not all of them can be easily dismissed as "isolationists." I agree with and have often cited John Quincy Adams' caution that America must not "go abroad in search of monsters to destroy." On September 11, a monster came to us. If he comes again with similar or greater force, which I expect is more than possible, Americans will support, indeed demand, an even more forceful response.

Among the reasons for Bush's reelection in 2004 is that he ran as a "war president." But now, without the shock of another September 11, people are growing weary of war and the costs, in both lives and dollars, that war exacts. It is not, I suspect, because we are a peace-loving people but because we are a comfortable

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people. "The great objective of ending tyranny is the concentrated work of generations," said the president.

They are stirring words, even if one knows that tyranny will never be decisively ended short of Our Lord's return in glory, and that, apart from those directly engaged in matters military and diplomatic, Americans are concentrated on many other things.

George W. Bush has provided a fresh conceptual framework for America's role in the world, and has acted upon it with remarkable energy. Whether the energy is matched by wisdom is debatable and is, in fact, hotly debated. He believes, and urges us to believe, that idealism is realism. We do not have to choose between national interests (such as oil) or national commitments (such as the security of Israel) and our moral responsibility in world affairs; they are all of a piece.

It is a bold and comprehensive proposal, and it may well be vindicated. It may be unfair that such a proposal will stand or fall upon the outcome in Iraq, but so it probably is. If there is not another September 11, and if there is not another major conflict to distract attention from Iraq, and if two years from now the situation there seems to be only more of the same, except with many more Americans dead, the Bush proposal will be judged a reckless failure, as many are rushing to judge it now.

There are other and more positive "ifs," of course, and they are confidently asserted by the administration every day. I believe the confidence is not feigned, and I hope it is warranted. "America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one." We should all want to believe that, and some of us can succeed in believing that it is approximately true. As I have written on many occasions: On balance, and considering the alternatives, America has been and is a force for good in the world. The Bush proposal ups the ante on how much good America can be for the world. If he is wrong, and considering the alternatives, the consequences would likely be disastrous, both in domestic politics and world affairs. Which is good reason to hope he is right.

FT

MESSIANIC JEWS: A THIRD WAY?

At Beth Israel Hospital, on First Avenue and Seventeenth Street, just around the corner from where I live, there was in 1994 a round-the-clock vigil of crowds of Hasidic Jews keeping watch as their rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, slowly died. He was ninety-two years old and left no designated successor to head the Lubavitcher movement, which has enterprises around the world. Some of his followers believe he will rise from the dead and this will inaugurate the final messianic kingdom. The significance of such messianic expectations among Jews has been sharply debated in these pages by David Berger and David Singer (see FT, May 2003).

A different kind of Jewish messianism is today found among the twenty to thirty thousand Jews who have accepted Jesus as the Messiah but who, insisting that they are still Jews, indeed that they are more fully Jews by virtue of following the Jewish Messiah, have formed messianic synagogues. There are over three hundred such congregations, most of them affiliated with the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC), the International Association of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues (IAMCS), and the International Messianic Jewish Alliance (IMJA). Jews in the Holy Land who have become Catholic have been given their own bishop, and the renewal movement founded by Kiko Arguello and encouraged by Pope John Paul II, which is known as the Neocatechumenal Way, has established on the top of Mount Korazym, near the Sea of Galilee, "Domus Galilaeae," where on Saturdays Catholics, messianic Jews, and Orthodox Jews gather to praise the God of Israel.

Admittedly, it can get somewhat confusing. It is a confusion that the Church has from time to time tried to prevent by insisting that one is either a Jew or a Christian. Jesus-believing Jews who continued to practice Judaism were excommunicated at the Second Council of Nicea (787), and there was, for instance, this seventh-century profession of faith for Jewish converts: "I do here and now renounce every right and observance of the Jewish religion, detesting all its most solemn ceremonies and tenets that in former days I kept and held. In future I will practice no rite or celebration connected with it, nor any custom of my past error, promising neither to seek it out nor to perform it." That was thirteen hundred years ago, and some insist it is still the only course of religious integrity.

Theologian Ellen Charry, a convert from Judaism, writes that "the religion attributed to Jesus by the Gospels overturns nearly every Jewish belief and practice .... Christians do not worship a Jewish Messiah—they worship the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God incarnate." Messianic Jews, she believes, represent a "duplicitous *tertium quid* that has neither Jewish nor Christian theological integrity, no matter how sincere its adherents may be." Rabbi David Novak is emphatic that Jews who accept Jesus are still Jews, although very bad Jews, while Michael Wyschogrod (in his book *Abraham's Promise*) insists, as we have

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discussed in these pages, that such Jews—Cardinal Lustiger of Paris, for instance—are still bound to be Torah observant.

A useful overview of these disputes is provided by David J. Rudolph in "Messianic Jews and Christian Theology," an essay in a recent issue of the ecumenical journal *Pro Ecclesia*. Rudolph's contention, directly contrary to that of Charry, is that messianic Jews constitute a kind of "third" community that overlaps both Judaism and Christianity. Presumably they could be completely integrated into the Church while maintaining aspects of Jewish identity and practice but in reality, he says, this has resulted in complete assimilation. Messianic Jews, he contends, need communities of their own. It is difficult, if not impossible, to see how this can be squared with Catholic ecclesiology. And it is very improbable that messianic Jews will be included, as Rudolph says they should be included, in the Jewish-Christian dialogue.

That being said, the community of messianic Jews seems to be growing and is developing theologically sophisticated arguments that, however apparently eccentric, should not be ignored. I confess to being more than a mite uneasy with some of the initiatives of the Neocatechumenal Way in this connection, but it must be admitted that the Church is still probing toward a fuller understanding of what St. Paul, in Romans 9:11, called the "mystery" of God's purposes in the relationship between the Church and the people of Israel.

That probing goes on, Paul suggests, against an eschatological horizon, and it may be that ours is a time and the growth of messianic Judaism is a catalyst for understanding, just a little more clearly, the mystery of God's plan.

While We're At It

■ It was axiomatic for the early Fathers of the Church that "Scripture interprets Scripture." It was further understood that Christ is the Logos who speaks and is spoken of in all the words (*logoi*) of Scripture. This was a theme addressed by our Robert Louis Wilken in a lecture to the Catholic bishops before their June meeting in Chicago. In the last hundred years and more, much biblical scholarship has been preoccupied with an antiquarian search for the "original meaning" of texts divorced from the living voice of Scripture. Robert Jenson takes up these questions in a recent issue of *Pro Ecclesia*: "Nor do such observations impose alien doctrine on the Old Testament. Gerhard von Rad's observation, that it was not a succession of words that came to the succession of prophets, but always the same Word who came to each prophet in turn, passed me by when I was hearing his lectures, but has latterly worked its way into the very fabric of my theology. That 'the word came to . . .' cannot mean that God sent some words to one prophet and then another batch to another prophet and so on, if for no other reason than that they quote each other. This latter phenomenon would utterly falsify the prophetic claim, were it not that they are all hearing the same thing, or rather, indeed momentarily embodying the same One. Were all the prophets one prophet, they would be the incarnate Word—which is precisely what is supposed to have happened with Jesus. The reason it can be *true* that 'the prophets tell of' Christ is not that they made promises that happened to be fulfilled by his coming—and others that were not—but that Christ is the one who spoke by them, testifying to himself. Moreover, once we note this we will perceive similar structures in the other genres of Old Testament witness. Thus, for a key instance, we may ask: Who cries out to the Lord in the Psalms, or praises him, or celebrates pilgrimage to the place of his Presence? The answer that emerges from the Psalms themselves is the people of Israel. For even the 'individual psalms of lament' are in the Psalter because they did not remain the property of whoever first uttered any of them, but were incorporated in a prayer-and-hymn book for the 'great congregation.' But if the Church's basic christological claims are true, the congregation of this congregation is Jesus as the Christ. St. Augustine would speak of the *totus Christus*, Christ as head of his body and just so as one person with those who are his body. It is finally this *totus Christus* who prays—who always prayed—in the Spirit's Temple, whether of Jerusalem or of the Church."

■ In 1984 John Paul II asked Joaquin Navarro-Valls to reorganize and run the Vatican press office, which he has been doing ever since. Benedict XVI has reappointed him, and he's staying on. A former physician, psychiatrist, and journalist, Navarro-Valls is described by everyone as personable and super-competent—although, as is to be expected, journalists complain that they do not always get what they want from him. He recently gave an unusually personal interview to Stefania Rossini of *L'Espresso*. At the moment of John Paul's death, the people in the room broke into a *Te Deum*, he reports. "The religious sisters, the secretary, and the few others who were present spontaneously intoned it to thank God, not for his death of course, but for those eighty-four years that were so fruitful. I myself found

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it extraordinarily difficult in that moment to recite the usual prayers on behalf of the deceased." Has the transition to a new pontificate been difficult? "It has been very easy. There is a twofold continuity between the two pontiffs, on both the personal and the intellectual levels. John Paul II was the one who called Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger at the beginning of his pontificate, and they carried out a continual exchange of ideas. If you only knew the delight of witnessing a conversation between those two! On the one side the philosopher-pope, on the other the cardinal-theologian, and between them an uninterrupted flow." Conflicts between Church and state seem to be sharpening in Spain and elsewhere. Navarro-Valls responds: "Do you want my opinion? There should be separation, but not mutual ignorance. Church and state are two distinct realities that come together in the citizen and in the believer. From this point of view, the secular state is a great victory for humanity, a sphere of liberty in which all, believers and nonbelievers, should be able to express themselves freely." Not a bad formulation, that.

■ A leading advocate of same-sex marriage is William N. Eskridge, author of *Gaylaw: Challenging Apartheid in the Closet*, who writes that building law upon the gay experience "involves the reconfiguration of family—de-emphasizing blood, gender, and kinship ties and emphasizing the value of interpersonal commitment. In our legal culture the linchpin of family law has been the marriage between a man and a woman who have children through procreative sex. Gay experience with 'families we choose' delinks family from gender, blood, and kinship. Gay families of choice are relatively ungendered, raise children that are biologically unrelated to one or both parents, and often form no more than a shadowy connection between the larger kinship groups." What was the institution of marriage, with all its familial and inter-familial constitutive parts, is now reduced without remainder to "interpersonal commitment." The quotation from Eskridge is included in a timely study published by the Institute for American Values, "The Future of Family Law." The study examines proposals by the American Law Institute and the Law Commission of Canada for the legal redefinition of marriage. In criticism of such truly radical proposals, the authors write, "Institutions like marriage and parenthood are not simply mechanisms to fulfill individual needs and aspirations. They are also thick, multi-layered realities that speak to the needs for meaning and identity within human community. Marriage is the complex cultural site for opposite-sex bonding. A rich heritage of symbols, myths, theologies, traditions, poetry, and art has clustered around the marital bond. To change the core features of marriage is to impact real people, adults and children, whose lives will be significantly shaped by the renewal or decline of this institution." What do we lose if marriage is redefined around the central goal of affirming "relationship diversity"? Quite a lot, as it turns out. The authors write: "Marriage serves critical purposes in human culture. It addresses the fact of sexual difference between men and women, including the unique vulnerabilities that women face in pregnancy and childbirth. It promotes a unique form of life and culture that integrates the goods of sexual attraction, interpersonal love and commitment, childbirth, child care and socialization, and mutual economic and psychological assistance. It provides a social frame for procreativity. It fosters and maintains connections between children and their natural parents. It sustains a complex form of social interdependency between men and women. It supports an integrated form of parenthood, uniting the biological (or adoptive), gestational, and social roles that parents play." A particular strength of the fifty-page study is that it underscores—in addition to the weight of history, moral philosophy, and religion—the case for the traditional family, with special reference to the wellbeing of children, that is now overwhelmingly supported by the findings of the social sciences.

■ The Anglican Consultative Council met in June. The United States and Canadian provinces were invited, but only to present their defense of their departure from two millennia of Christian teaching on sexual morality. It appears they were not very persuasive. Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, made an atypically fervent presentation, declaring the state of the Anglican communion to be "catastrophic." He deplored the preoccupation with internal quarrels when so much of the world was awaiting the ministrations of the Anglican communion. He cited world hunger, AIDS, war, and other global miseries. Proclaiming the saving gospel of Jesus Christ was not high on the agenda. In fact, it apparently did not make the "to do" list at all. Despite a house divided on questions specifically pertinent to Christian faith, the bishops in solemn assembly were as one in offering advice on world affairs. They called for the United States to get out of Iraq and for the reunification of North and South Korea. The latter resolution made no reference to terrible human rights violations in the North, including an estimated 200,000 people in concentration camps and millions killed by government-induced starvation. And, following the lead of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and other oldline bodies, they voted unanimously to consider disinvestment from Israel. The resolution says, "It is the Israeli occupation in its

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many facets that foments the violence and fuels the conflict." That simplistic assertion displays ignorance or mendacity of a very low order. There is no reference to Arab and Palestinian wars with the declared purpose of eradicating Israel, nor to the campaigns of terrorism and suicide bombings, nor to the Palestinian rejection of the near-total withdrawals offered by Israel at Camp David in 2000. The oldline churches declare themselves in "solidarity" with Palestinian Christians, ignoring the fact that Christians under the pressure of Palestinian and radical Islamist forces are fleeing the Middle East as fast as they can. Martin Peretz writes in the *New Republic*: "So I come to an unavoidable conclusion. The obsession here is not positive, for one side, but rather negative, against the other side. The clerics and the lay leaders on this indefensible crusade are so fixated on Palestine because their obsession, which can be buttressed by various Christian sources and traditions, is really with the Jews. A close look at the morbid passion makes one realize that its roots include an ancient hostility to the House of Israel, an ugly survival of hoary intolerance into some of the allegedly enlightened precincts of modern Christendom." Without mentioning anti-Semitism, he means anti-Semitism. Leave aside the swipe at "Christian sources and traditions." There is surely more than a little to Peretz's claim that the motive of the Anglicans and others seems to be negative rather than positive. There are so many other suffering and victimized people in the world for whom the Consultative Council might have expressed its concern. Why the Palestinians? The answer does seem to have something to do with Jews. And, it is necessary to add, with the United States. The Iraqi and Korean resolutions are aimed at U.S. policy. That Israel is supported by the United States doubles the intensity of selective moral outrage. Let history record that, as the Anglican communion was dissolving in disordered array, it did its prophetic duty in trying to set to rights a disordered world.

■ "We're Prime Time, Baby!" It's not an editorial title that strikes one as a likely candidate for the history books, but the point being made is not without historical significance. The editors of *Christianity Today* are celebrating the "newfound status" of evangelicals in American life. Their evidence is drawn exclusively from the new and generally respectful attention evangelicals are receiving in the mainstream media. (They make allowances for "the continuing education" still required for such pundits as Lewis Lapham, Frank Rich, and Paul Krugman.) The editors make no reference to the academy, the courts, the arbiters of literature and the arts, or others in control of "the commanding heights of culture." In these sectors, evangelicals are still viewed as aliens, and dangerous aliens at that. Being so very impressed by the growing number of evangelicals appearing on television shows is not a mark of having securely arrived. Nonetheless, the editors are right that the general media are paying more respectful attention. While somewhat overstating the change, the editorial concludes with sound advice: "So, we've been mainstreamed. Now what? First, we can thank God. Jesus Christ's unique message and values will gain a larger and more respectful hearing. Second, as noted, we really can't play the persecution card anymore. As 'players,' we will be criticized sharply still, but that's just part of life in America. Third, let's remember that how we got here is how we will stay here: Careful scholarship. Measured proclamations. Majoring on the majors. Grassroots organizing. Patience. Prayer. Now that we're prime-time, we don't want to start acting like American idols."

■ You have probably read as much as you want to read about battles over Supreme Court appointments. Were First Things a weekly, you would have read a lot of it in these pages, but we are not. On the other hand, this journal has a big stake in the discussion of what we called the judicial usurpation of politics in a famous (notorious?) symposium of November 1996, and almost every issue follows up on developments that make more pressingly pertinent the question of the symposium's title, "The End of Democracy?" From all the commentary appearing in the press and online, I think it important to rescue the following by Judge Robert Bork, who was a key participant in our original symposium. He is addressing the consequences of a Supreme Court marked by unchecked power, indifference to the Constitution, and philosophical incompetence that would be risible were it not so sad. Along the way he provides a handy checklist of the damage already done, which might be useful in explaining to others why remedies are so urgent: "Consider just a few of the Court's accomplishments: The justices have weakened the authority of other institutions, public and private, such as schools, businesses, and churches; assisted in sapping the vitality of religion through a transparently false interpretation of the Establishment Clause; denigrated marriage and family; destroyed taboos about vile language in public; protected as free speech the basest pornography, including computer-simulated child pornography; weakened political parties and permitted prior restraints on political speech, violating the core of the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of speech; created a right to abortion virtually on demand, invalidating the laws of all fifty states; whittled down capital punishment, on the path, apparently, to abolishing it entirely; mounted a campaign to

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normalize homosexuality, culminating soon, it seems obvious, in a right to homosexual marriage; permitted racial and gender discrimination at the expense of white males; and made the criminal justice system needlessly slow and complex, tipping the balance in favor of criminals. Justice O'Connor, a warm, down-to-earth, and very likeable person, joined many, though not all, of these bold attempts to remake America. Whatever one may think of these outcomes as matters of policy, not one is authorized by the Constitution and some are directly contrary to it. All of them, however, are consistent with the left-liberal liberationist impulse that advances moral anarchy."

■ The headline in *Jewish Weekly* puts it nicely: "Naval Academy Next Target for ADL." In a country as religious as America, the Anti-Defamation League enjoys a target-rich environment. Buoyed by his success in drawing attention to "religious intolerance" at the Air Force Academy, Abe Foxman of ADL is going to Congress to remedy a similar oppression at the Naval Academy in Annapolis. It seems that, when they go to lunch, the 4,000 midshipmen are required to stand for announcements and a blessing by a chaplain before they can sit down to eat. It is true, says Foxman, that nobody is required to pray, "but you must go to lunch where you have a prayer imposed on you." How dare you impose your blessing on me? We can be sure that this is not the last target on Mr. Foxman's list of things to be eradicated from American public life.

■ The meeting of the Catholic bishops' conference in June seemed to be a pretty routine affair. There was no serious discussion before they approved for another five years the "zero tolerance" charter and norms developed at the Dallas meeting in 2002. So it is again officially confirmed, and perhaps with good reason, that bishops cannot be trusted to exercise sound pastoral judgment with respect to their clergy. A million dollars was voted for a study on the "causes and context" of sex abuse, in the hope that foundations will come up with the several more million required. The archbishop of Boston predicted that the study will show that priests are no more prone to abuse children than men in other walks of life, which some may find reassuring. A "Statement of Episcopal Commitment" was overwhelmingly (223-4) adopted. Noting that bishops don't come under the charter and norms because they are accountable only to the Holy See, the bishops promise that they'll report to the papal nuncio allegations of sexual abuse of minors by other bishops. It seems like the least they can do. Meanwhile, several accused bishops remain in office and those who have resigned under pressure are apparently members in good standing of the conference. Not on the agenda were two very public instances of episcopal malfeasance in recent months: A bishop who, in connection with the Terri Schiavo case, publicly rejected the Church's teaching on the care of the disabled, and another who issued an unconditional affirmation of gays and lesbians in the Church without a reference to Church teaching on homosexual relations. Such items were, as usual, not on the agenda because, despite all the talk about "fraternal correction," club rules mandate that bishops not embarrass other bishops. The onus of correction is conveniently left to Rome, which apparently is just fine also with those bishops who regularly complain about the centralizing of authority in Rome. Among other matters, a request to increase by four percent the diocesan assessment in order to help cover a budget deficit in the Washington bureaucracy was decisively rejected. Some saw this as an indication of declining confidence in the way the conference operates. The bishops will meet again in November.

■ Charles Simic is a foreign correspondent for the *New York Review of Books* and he files a report from the American South where he went to see what those evangelical Christians are really up to. The news is not good: "Skepticism, empirical evidence, and book learning are in low esteem among the Protestant evangelicals. To ask about the laws of cause and effect would be a sin. They reject modern science and dream of a theocratic state where such blasphemous subject matter would be left out from the school curriculum. Their ideal, as a shrewd young fellow told me in Tuscaloosa, is unquestioning obedience and complete conformity in matters of religion and politics . . . . If evangelicals haven't gone around smashing TV sets and computers, it is because they recognize their power to spread their message. Aside from that, they would like to secede intellectually from the rest of the world." John Wilson, editor of *Books and Culture*, has a little fun with Simic and his dispatch from the Other America. Wilson writes: "I don't know if I should let Simic and his *NYRB* readers in on our secret. You know what I mean—that the situation for them is far worse than they imagine. After all, those hellfire Christians he encountered in the South are pretty easy to identify as the enemy. But we Protestant evangelicals are wise as serpents. Some of us are double agents. We learn to speak the language of culture, to penetrate the networks of the soon-to-be-damned. Simic might bump into us at a concert or a poetry reading, where we sip Starbucks and speak easily of Neruda and pretend that we believe in cause and effect. All the while, of course, we're thinking to ourselves who will be the first to go

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when the theocratic revolution finally comes. Be afraid, Charles Simic. Be very afraid." Nicely done. On the other hand, while Simic's report is conventionally hysterical, is not Wilson putting himself and other evangelicals who "speak easily of Neruda" on the side of Simic and *NYRB* in so emphatically, if with a lighter touch, distancing himself from "them"? Yes, there are redneck evangelicals, but then there is also the wine and Brie set that reads *Books and Culture*. Might one not infer from what Wilson says that Simic's hysterical generalizations about "them" are fully warranted? Just asking, mind you.

■ "Happy children don't grow up to build concentration camps, Dr. Henry Morgentaler told a University of Western Ontario convocation yesterday, as he argued that abortion has helped radically reduce hate and violent crime in Canada," reports the *Toronto Star*. Morgentaler is Canada's foremost champion of the unlimited abortion license. Many protested his getting an honorary degree from Western Ontario, including the board of governors, which does not have authority over the committee that made the choice. While he is all for nipping in the bud, so to speak, the potentially hateful and violent, Morgentaler says he is not an advocate of eugenics. The reduction in crime is "an unintended, if happy, consequence" of choices made by women, he says. Rosie DiManno, a *Star* columnist, says she is for "the absolute right to reproductive freedom," but is uncomfortable with Morgentaler's argument. "Abortion as social corrective that's spared us a bunch of felonious misfits is offensive. Let's not go there, Dr. Morgentaler," she writes. Sorry, ma'am, you are already there.

■ Michael O'Brien of Jesus College, Cambridge, has been reading Bill Clinton's *My Life*. He writes in the *Times Literary Supplement*, "Important to Clinton's politics has been his religion, which explains him as much as it does George W. Bush. This is easy to lose sight of, because Clinton supported abortion and gay rights, hung out with Hollywood stars, and was loathed by many Evangelicals. One of the shrewder suggestions, in a book disappointingly thin on analysis, is that 'the New Right Republicans . . . hated me because I was an apostate, a white southern Protestant, who could appeal to the very people they had always taken for granted.' But, in fact, Baptists are so decentralized and diverse that they do not have apostates, only those for whom one needs to pray." Contrary to Clinton's wishful thinking, O'Brien suggests, the Baptist who says, "I'm praying for you," may not mean that he finds you appealing but that, without his prayers, you're probably going to Hell.

■ So it has come around at last. The *New York Times* announces the launching of "Logo," MTV's new all-gay-all-the-time channel. But don't expect anything racy. This is not about sex, we are told, meaning the channel will not be carrying gay porn. Brian Graden, head of Logo, says, "When you tell a story about gay rodeo or gay surfers it's not a story about sex nor does it need to be. So much connects us beyond sexuality." Well, not really. The gay and lesbian "community" is exclusively defined and constituted by sex: by having sex, desiring sex, talking about sex, and promoting themes and sensibilities related to sex between people of the same sex. Same-sex sex is the foundation of the gay world, the axis upon which it turns. Which is not to say that sex is all that gays or lesbians care about. They may care about many things but, to the extent that something "connects" them, that something is sex. People who are not interested in same-sex sex are not connected, they are not part of the "community." The story continues: "Documentaries will feature a variety of gay lives: rugby players, surfers, rural dwellers, Cubans, and Republicans." Republicans? I can understand the desire to project the perception of gay diversity but, really, how exotic can they get?

■ Princeton's Elaine Pagels, who has done so much to popularize early gnostic heresies, protests a review by John Burgess in the *Christian Century* of her book *Beyond Belief*. The title of the review was "Going Creedless." "Not at all," writes Pagels. "I belong to an Episcopal church that practices chanting, singing, or saying the creed in every major worship service. The book neither dismisses nor deprecates beliefs, but attempts to place the Nicene statement in historical perspective." She is much taken with the Gospel of Thomas, which "I do regard as a remarkable treasure of the first two centuries, along with the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John." John Burgess writes in response: "We need to understand why Nicene Christianity has never been able to think of itself as just one valid theological option among many. Perhaps truth (and the living God) really does force us to make theological choices." There's that old either/or exclusivism again.

■ A subscription pitch for the *Christian Century* highlights this: "Rated one of 'The 50 Best Magazines' by *Chicago Tribune*." At least that, I should think.

■ By the time this sees print, the ELCA Lutherans will have met in churchwide assembly and decided to do something or other about gay clergy and the approval of same-sex unions. The August *Forum Letter* says the options are: (1) Do nothing and agree to disagree; (2)

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While not endorsing same-sex marriage, offer acceptance and "pastoral care" to couples going that route; (3) Maintain traditional standards for clergy but agree not to discipline those who violate them. Whatever decision is made, a major division in the ELCA seems likely and "confessional" Lutherans—those who adhere to Scripture and the sixteenth-century confessional writings—have scheduled a post-assembly gathering to consider what form that division should take. Meanwhile, Carl Braaten, a theological luminary in American Lutheranism for four decades, has written a moving open letter to Mark Hanson, presiding bishop of the ELCA. He notes that in recent years some of the most distinguished theologians in the ELCA have left for the Roman Catholic Church or, in a few cases, Orthodoxy: Jaroslav Pelikan, Robert Louis Wilken, Jay Rochelle, Leonard Klein, Bruce Marshall, David Fagerberg, and Reinhard Hütter. "They are saying," writes Braaten, "that the Roman Catholic Church is now more hospitable to confessional Lutheran teaching than the church in which they were baptized and confirmed." They are saying that the ELCA has become just another liberal protestant denomination. Karl Barth called liberal protestantism (*Kulturprotestantismus*) a "heresy," which, says Braaten, is "an assessment with which I fully agree." He asks, "Are all these theologians wrong in their assessment of the ELCA?" "They are not stupid people; they don't tell lies; they don't make rash decisions. They are all serious Christians. . . . The ELCA is driving out the best and the brightest theologians of our day." Braaten notes that Bishop Hanson recently wrote that he hopes some day soon that Catholics and Lutherans will be able to celebrate the Eucharist together. "My instant reaction," says Braaten, "was that it is becoming less and less likely, as the ELCA is being taken hostage by forces alien to the solid traditions Lutherans share with Roman Catholicism. The confessional chasm is actually becoming wider." Braaten, it should be noted, has for decades been among the foremost champions of Lutheran-Roman Catholic theological dialogue. As for himself, Braaten says he will not "cut and run." He says he has nowhere else to go, although he does not explain why that should be the case. The *Forum Letter* says the question is this: "Is there room in this church for pastors and congregations who want to be authentically Lutheran?" Or is it the case, the writer wonders, that the ELCA is determined to be a big-tent church and those who don't like it can leave? The answer, it seems likely, is that of course there will be room for dissidents, at least for a time, if they keep a low profile and don't try to make trouble. But, as has been noted before, where orthodoxy is optional, it will sooner or later be proscribed. We will be returning to developments in the ELCA and the triumph of *Kulturprotestantismus* that has marked so much of the history of Christianity in America.

■ Recent news stories from the Vatican: "Drivers Should Drive Carefully, Pope Urges;" "Benedict Says Religion Helpful for Spiritual Health;" "Pope Declares Christianity Favors World Peace;" "Benedict XVI Encourages Dialogue Among World's Peoples;" "Children To Be Viewed as Blessing, Says Pope." "Benedict Endorses Regular Mass Attendance." So you can see these have been slow news months for folks on the Rome beat. Some observers see a "softening up" strategy to display the pope's "kinder and gentler" side before we get the headline "Pope Removes 300 Bishops for Malfeasance; Tells Theologians to Teach What Church Teaches or Get Out." My own hunch is that the prosaic headlines are attributable to the felt need to report everything the pope says, most of which is what the Church has always said, which it is his job to say but is not news.

■ That was one bilious brouhaha at the Air Force Academy, although not without its moments of comic relief. Americans United for the Naked Public Square (Barry Lynn, chief of patrol), the ADL, Yale Divinity School, and I don't know who all got involved. It seems the evangelical Protestant students there, and some of the same ilk on the faculty, were making a public display of their faith, even going to so far as trying to convince others of the truth of what they believe. This is, of course, a flagrant violation of the First Amendment, which guarantees the free exercise of religion so long as you keep it to yourself. A preacher in a chapel service was so blatant as to declare that the students and the academy itself belong to God. Barry Lynn pointed out that the academy belongs to all Americans and atheists should not be made to feel like second-class owners. I don't know what he does with the biblical passage, "The earth is the Lord's and the air force academies thereof." Protested as egregiously "insensitive" was a Pentecostal preacher who declared in another chapel service that unbelievers will "burn in Hell." Well, really. Closer government regulation of sermons is clearly in order. The heart of the problem, it seems, is that students want to share what they believe. The *New York Times* helpfully explains that evangelicals call this "witnessing." An oddity in the reporting was that the 85 percent of students who call themselves Christian were more or less consistently identified as evangelicals, when I'm told that at least half of them are Catholics. When Catholics, too, are getting into the evangelizing mode, you know big trouble is afoot. All the reports referred to a study of the academy done by Yale Divin-

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ity School, which concluded that there was a lot of inappropriate religion going on. I don't know how Yale got involved, but it should be kept in mind that at Yale's divinity school any claim to know the truth, never mind any attempt to share it with others, is deemed deeply offensive. Except, of course, for truths about multiculturalism, American imperialism, heteronormativity, and the splendors of buggery. I do think some things were out of line at the Air Force academy. For instance, the football coach put up a banner, "Team Jesus." At Yale, football is cheered moderately, and it is understandable that the folks from Yale were taken aback by the academy's exuberance for actually winning. The coach admitted he had gone a bit overboard, and he asked the players to join him in a prayer for greater humility as they go out to win one for The Captain (a.k.a. "You Know Who"). When Americans United, ADL, ACLU, and cognate guardians of our liberties first piled on, the general in charge of the academy won groveling marks for a finely orchestrated rite of self-denigration, but a later report from a committee appointed to study the situation suggested that students and faculty were guilty of no more than not keeping their religion under wraps. At the center of the affair was a Captain Melinda Morton, an ELCA Lutheran chaplain who said, according to the *Times*, that "the religious problem at the academy was 'pervasive.'" Pervasive religion is the very worst kind. Captain Morton, pictured with her buzz cut, scowl, and arms akimbo, looks like a mean lady you don't want to mess with. The Air Force, in what it said was a routine transfer, ordered her to Japan and she resigned her commission in protest. At the end of it all, Congressman Steve Israel, a Democrat of New York, was demanding that President Bush appoint a commission to investigate religion in the military. In a counter-move, the Catholic League and Focus on the Family are charging the academy with the violation of religious freedom. "I wasn't told," said a cadet, "that when I signed up with the Air Force I had to leave my religion at the door." It seems, however, that things are more or less returning to normal at the academy, with students and faculty chastened and everybody taking a sensitivity pledge, although not without a lingering surliness on the part of those who still say, although now in a whisper, that unbelievers are probably going to burn in hell. We are all indebted to Barry Lynn, Abe Foxman of ADL, the former Captain Morton, Congressman Israel, and the *New York Times* for reminding us that eternal vigilance is the price of keeping the government and its institutions unsullied by the views of citizens afflicted with "the religious problem." (After writing the above, I was told that the Air Force is planning regulations for the further house-training of religion. More next month.)

■ Billy Graham has come and gone here in New York. It was probably, he said, his last crusade. Almost a half century ago, in 1957, his crusade in Madison Square Garden established him as a fixture in American religion and public life. Now, at age eighty-six, he was old and frail. The sermons were shorter, and the message even simpler: Admit you are a sinner, tell Jesus you are sorry for your sins and accept his forgiveness. Maybe it was a mistake to hold the crusade in Queens. In the view from Manhattan, what happens in "the outer boroughs" does not count. In the buildup and first couple of days, the New York media paid passing attention. The crusade was not front-page news. I counted six stories in the inside pages of the *New York Times*, most of them highlighting a Graham remark on the Nixon tapes. Nixon was going on about the influence of Jews in American public life, and Graham allowed they had a "stranglehold" on the media. That was more than thirty years ago, and Graham has been apologizing ever since. But in the view of the *Times*, it's the really important thing to know about Graham. Along with the fact that his son Franklin called Islam an "evil and wicked" religion. The stories dwelt also on the organizing mechanics of the crusade, and told readers a little about the aliens living in the outer boroughs, the hundreds of evangelical and Pentecostal churches supporting the crusade, churches composed of Koreans, Hispanics, and blue-collar workers, none of whom read the *Times*. On the final day of the crusade, the Sunday edition had an op-ed piece by my friend Kenneth Woodward of *Newsweek*. He has a curious and long-standing animus toward Graham. He told once again the story of Graham watching a video of himself preaching and saying that he was inspired by the message. I think it is supposed to say something about Billy Graham's convoluted egotism. One wonders if Woodward has never, upon rereading something he wrote, said to himself that it is really good, maybe even inspiring. Not this particular piece, of course, but Woodward has done much that I hope he reads with considerable satisfaction. A large part of the column is given to a comparison between Graham and Father Ted Hesburgh of Notre Dame, whom Woodward greatly admires. Whatever one thinks of Graham or Hesburgh, one can hardly imagine a less apposite comparison. The Monday after the crusade ended, the *Times* did run a big and generally straight front-page story, where it competed with the city's Gay Pride Parade on the same Sunday. Then there is the factor that New York is largely a Catholic city. In Graham's last New York crusade, in Central Park in 1991, John Cardinal O'Connor took the lead in securing the support of Catholic parishes. It was very different this time.

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Catholic leaders said they were too busy with their own programs to get involved in the crusade. Bishop William Murphy of Long Island published a gracious word of welcome, as did the bishop of Brooklyn, Nicholas DiMarzio, although the latter appended a misleadingly stark depiction of how evangelicals and Catholics differ on the meaning of salvation. From Edward Cardinal Egan of the archdiocese of New York there was a deafening silence. All these years later, Billy Graham in New York closing out the arc of one of the most remarkable evangelistic enterprises of the modern era was a historic occasion by any measure of religious and cultural importance. Moreover, since the 1991 crusade there has been a dramatic rapprochement between evangelical Protestants and Catholics, a rapprochement supported by the Holy See and in which Billy Graham has, albeit indirectly, played a crucial part. No matter. For the archdiocese of New York, it was another sideshow playing in the outer boroughs. That is a very great pity.

■ If you want an effective anti-American at the helm, elect an American anti-American. That would seem to be the logic of an item in the *Christian Century* on the election of Clifton Kirkpatrick, the top executive of the Presbyterian Church (USA), as president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. The alliance issued a statement condemning "global neoliberal capitalism" and making, as the *Century* puts it, "barely veiled references to America as a dominant 'empire.'" The document says the current world order is rooted in an "immoral economic system defended by empire," and defines empire as "the coming together of economic, political, and military domination led by one powerful nation." Aha, I see what they mean by "barely veiled." The *Century* says Kirkpatrick's election "was the second sign in two years that worldwide Protestant church alliances see some U.S. mainline leaders as well positioned to voice dissenting views to government powers." The other is Mark Hanson of the ELCA Lutherans who was elected president of the Lutheran World Federation. Hanson said that, as "a northern male religious figure," he hesitated to accept election but was persuaded by overseas leaders. It does not say whether his problem was with being northern, male, or religious. Truly touching is the delusion of religious leaders in other countries that PCUSA and the ELCA exercise clout in American politics. On the other hand, if you're entirely out of it, even the marginal seem close to power. Ordinarily, however, if you want to influence somebody you try to get to him through his friends, not his declared enemies. The same applies, one might think, in trying to influence the "government powers" of America.

■ Remember the old *Saturday Night Live* show when the news anchor began with, "Good evening. I'm Chevy Chase, and you're not." I loved the sheer chutzpah of it. That seemed to be the mode adopted by the nation's prestigious scientific organizations when the Kansas Board of Education held hearings on teaching about the controversy regarding evolution and the origins of life. "We're the experts and you're not," the American Association for the Advancement of Science, in effect, responded. Dr. Kenneth Miller of Brown University allowed that declining to testify "can be made to look as if you do not want to defend science in public, or you are too afraid to face the intelligent-design people in public." The Kansas hearing was "a political show trial," sniffed Eugenie Scott of the National Center for Science Education. Never mind that there are highly certified scientists, and not only intelligent design proponents, who think there is a legitimate debate about the way evolution is taught in the schools. There are times when you rightly refuse to dignify an idea by declining to participate in the discussion of it. Some time back, for instance, I declined an invitation to be part of a university panel exploring whether the CIA and Israel were behind the attacks of September 11. But it seems to me the scientific establishment is making a big mistake in adopting the Chevy Chase posture. A state board of education may be seriously mistaken but it is, after all, the legitimate educational authority in the state. It is not very smart, and certainly does nothing to enhance scientific education, to dismiss its members and those who elected them as a bunch of ignorant wackos. Dr. Miller and others of the establishment do plan to testify in a case in Dover, Pennsylvania, where teachers are instructed to acknowledge that there is controversy about the theory of evolution. "In a court of law, you have standards, rules, and laws you are interpreting," Dr. Scott explained. "In Kansas, it was a free-for-all." This is really not very smart. The mandarins of the scientific establishment will get together with the robed masters of the judicial usurpation of politics to keep the booboisie from questioning their betters. "We're Chevy Chase, and you're not." And then, the dimwitted masses having been put in their place, the controversy over how to teach children about evolution will go away.

■ Not surprisingly, those who were so eager to have Terri Schiavo dead seized upon the autopsy report as vindication of their position. If the report is to be believed (it is being contested by some close to the case), it confirms the deep damage to Schiavo and discredits the claim that her husband was a wife-beater. An unexpected contribution to the ongoing discussion is a long essay by Joan Didion in the far leftward *New*

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York Review of Books. She writes, "What might have seemed a central argument in this case—the ethical argument, the argument about whether, when it comes to life and death, any of us can justifiably claim the ability or the right to judge the value of any other being's life—remained largely unexpressed, mentioned, when at all, only to be dismissed." Regularly raised was the matter of Terri Schiavo's wishes. She was supposed to have said years before, "No tubes for me." Didion writes: "Imagine it. You are in your early 20s. You are watching a movie, say on Lifetime, in which someone has a feeding tube. You pick up the empty chip bowl. 'No tubes for me,' you say as you get up to fill it. What are the chances you have given this even a passing thought?" After all the spinning is done (an eschatological thought), the Terri Schiavo case comes down to this: Do we have the right to kill people who have severe disabilities? The answer given in her case must not be permitted the final word.

■ Forty years is a good run. The spring issue of the *Public Interest*, founded in 1965 by Irving Kristol, Daniel Bell, and Nathan Glazer, is the last. The *Public Interest* never had more than a few thousand subscribers but it was followed closely by people of influence and its impact upon public discourse and policy is beyond dispute. The initial approach to public policy was through the social sciences, but that changed over the years, as Kristol, commonly called the godfather of neoconservatism, explains in the final issue: "But we were never single-minded economists or social scientists. On the contrary, we soon discovered that behind the hard realities of economics and social science were the equally hard realities of morality, family, culture, and religion—the 'habits of the mind' and 'habits of the heart,' as Tocqueville said, that determine the quality and character of a people." A neoconservative, Kristol once observed, is a liberal who has been mugged by reality. During the seventies, a good many liberals in the academy were mugged by the counter-cultural left. Kristol writes: "The counter-culture, for its part, moved steadily toward an aggressive secularism and an animus against religion, foreshadowing an ominous tension between the secular and the religious in American politics. Here, too, the *Public Interest* found itself on firm ground. It had always had a benign interest in religion—a secular interest in religion, one might say, deriving from traditional political and moral philosophy, which has been appreciative of religion as a social as well as a spiritual force." Of the founders, Glazer remained somewhat closer to standard-brand liberalism, remaining an admirer of European social democratic policies. In the final issue he writes, "Foreign policy was no part of early neoconservatism: Had it been, there would have been additional bases of division among the early neoconservatives. How the term 'neoconservatism' morphed from a political tendency that dealt almost entirely with domestic social policy to one that deals almost entirely—indeed, entirely—with foreign policy is an interesting question, which I will not explore further here. There is very little overlap between those who promoted the neoconservatism of the 1970s and those committed to its latter-day manifestation." Without directly disagreeing with Glazer, Kristol notes in his essay that the neoconservatives of the 1970s who had strong views on foreign policy expressed those views in *Commentary*. Between the *Public Interest*, *Commentary*, and the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal* under the late Robert Bartley, there was a powerfully influential *troika*. "It is astonishing," writes Kristol, "that the combined efforts of these three publications (two with very modest circulations) should have been so consequential—or so it would seem today, to judge by the extraordinary interest displayed throughout the world in neoconservatism." The last word goes to the most recent and last editor of *PI*, Adam Wolfson: "Conservatives of an older sort were, it is fair to say, neglectful of the idea of the public interest. This was perhaps owing to an understandable reaction on their part against the dangerously sweeping claims of various brands of early twentieth-century socialist thought. Thus a prominent conservative once affirmed, as a matter of principle, 'that anybody should be free to produce, sell, and buy anything that may be produced or sold at all.' Many libertarians today still hold to this view, but such sentiments are not representative of modern conservatism as a whole. Today, it is conservatives who are most likely to think in terms of the public interest, as can be seen in their approach to biotechnological advances, America's entitlement programs and legal institutions, the family and civil society, or even foreign policy." Wolfson concludes: "To put it most simply, and thus somewhat crudely, we have seen a great change in our politics, as one party has abandoned the public interest and another party has taken it up—at least for the time being—as its central, animating ideal. One party has succeeded another as the 'national party.' This shift took about 40 years, roughly matching the period from our first issue in 1965 to our final one in 2005. Of course, the *PI* never made anything like this one of its aims, but it still probably played some part in the transformation." A crucially important part, many would say. *PI* emboldened liberals to distance themselves from what liberalism had done to itself. In the history of what are called "little magazines," few have demonstrated in such a big way the power of ideas in shaping the life of a nation.

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■ If kerfuffles can be huge, there was a couple of months ago a huge kerfuffle about U.S. soldiers desecrating the Qu'ran. One account had it being flushed down a toilet, another that it was near a urinal and was inadvertently splashed, and yet another said an interrogator sat on the book to show that it is nothing special. The excitements followed a government report that said there had been thirteen allegations of Qu'ran abuse, five of them substantiated, and two being accidental. Charles Krauthammer writes: "Let's understand what mishandling means. Under the rules the Pentagon later instituted at Guantanamo, proper handling of the Koran means using two hands and wearing gloves when touching it. Which means that if any guard held the Koran with one hand or had neglected to put on gloves, this would be considered mishandling." He adds: "On the scale of human crimes where, say, 10 is the killing of 2,973 innocent people in one day [September 11] and 0 is jaywalking, this ranks as perhaps a 0.01." Krauthammer raises an interesting question: "Even greater hypocrisy is to be found here at home. Civil libertarians, who have been dogged in making sure that FBI-collected Guantanamo allegations are released to the world, seem exquisitely sensitive to mistreatment of the Koran. A rather selective scrupulousness. When an American puts a crucifix in a jar of urine and places it in a museum, civil libertarians rise immediately to defend it as free speech. And when someone makes a painting of the Virgin Mary, smears it with elephant dung and adorns it with porn, not only is that free speech, it is art—deserving of taxpayer funding and an ACLU brief supporting the Brooklyn Museum when the mayor freezes its taxpayer subsidy." Is it simple hypocrisy? There are several possible explanations of why some people are so outraged about offenses against Islam and so blasé about, or even supportive of, attacks on Christianity. One is that the outrage is faked, and they are happy to pick up any stick with which to beat the Bush administration. Or maybe it is just multiculturalism run amok, which produces a love for every culture but one's own. Or maybe there are a lot more Muslims in the ACLU than we had thought. Or maybe the civil libertarians think Islam, unlike Christianity, is really dangerous and must not be provoked. Conversely, maybe they think Christianity is really dangerous and must therefore be attacked. There are so many possible answers to Krauthammer's puzzlement. I don't think we would go wrong if we started with blindingly partisan fury.

■ Fondly remembered is the *Detroit News* account of the opening service of a Lutheran convention in which it was reported that the procession was led by an altar boy "carrying a 142-year-old crucifer." Chalk it up to that legendary Lutheran longevity. Now *Catholic Eye* updates amusing media illiteracy with notes on the BBC's coverage of the papal funeral in which subtitles turned Carmelites into "Karma Light nuns," and Franciscans became "Fancy Scam monks." The best, however is from the *International Herald Tribune*: "The 84-year-old John Paul was laid out in Clementine Hall, dressed in white and red vestments . . . tucked under his left arm was the silver staff, called the crow's ear, that he had carried in public." Crozier, crow's ear, whatever.

■ She couldn't find a mosque that would allow it, so the Episcopal Cathedral of St John the Divine up on Morningside Heights invited Muslim feminist Amina Wadud to act as an imam in leading the Friday services. She gathered about a hundred very progressive and ostensibly Muslim men and women to join her, while hundreds of others stood outside protesting the violation of Islamic tradition in having a woman lead services and not separating men and women in public prayer. Having taken the lead in breaking up the Anglican communion, Episcopalians appear to be raising their sights to interreligious possibilities. Fomenting intra-Islamic controversy may complicate interreligious dialogue, but conflict is the price to be paid if you are the Episcopal Church and entrusted with the task of tutoring the lesser breeds, whether they be Muslim sexists or African Anglicans enslaved to a primitive "heteronormativity" that balks at the propriety of bishops with male lovers. It is an old story. *Take up the White Man's burden*, wrote Kipling, and expect no gratitude from those *sullen peoples / Half-devil and half-child*. Thankless though its task may be, Episcopalianism is determined to point the way to the future, even if it dies before others get there. There is a kind of altruism—perverse but not untouched by nobility—in this mission. Just as Kipling said.

■ The Germans offered a fast lane for young people seeking visas to attend the World Youth Day in Cologne. Worried that illegal aliens, especially Muslims, would take advantage of the process, the questionnaire asked applicants, *inter alia*, to say how and when Jesus died and to name the seven deadly sins and seven sacraments. A passing score was 70. The report doesn't say how many young Catholics were denied visas, but catechists might take note.

■ Now we have John Allen's *The Rise of Benedict XVI* (Doubleday, 249 pp. $19.95), and it is a welcome contribution to understanding the new pontificate. This book is not to be confused with Allen's earlier and very biased book on Cardinal Ratzinger, of which the author has repented but which the publisher

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shamelessly reissued, against Allen's protests, under the title *Pope Benedict XVI. Publishers Weekly* expressed surprise that Allen could produce the new book in two weeks, to which Allen responded that it didn't take him that long. Nine days holed up in a hotel room, writing sixteen hours per day, gave rise to *The Rise of Benedict XVI*. Of course he was holed up with his computerized files at his fingertips, and few reporters on the Vatican have files as comprehensive as John Allen's. I have been working for a year, sluggard that I am, on a book surveying the state of Catholicism in America and titled *Catholic Matters: Confusion, Controversy, and the Splendor of Truth*. Before sending it off to the publisher (Basic Books), I had occasion to double-check some dates and quotes with Allen's text, although my book is not mainly about the papal transition. It is not the first time I have drawn on his fine reportage. George Weigel has just finished a book on the transition, *God's Choice: Benedict XVI and the Future of the Catholic Church* (HarperCollins), with a publishing date of early November. So there are a lot of people working this fertile field. Allen has grown beyond the reflexive liberalism of his employer, the *National Catholic Reporter*, but there are lingering influences of his leftist past. For instance, in underscoring that the pontificate of Benedict may hold surprises, he repeatedly uses the trope "Only Nixon could go to China." In other words, Allen is writing chiefly for liberals, assuring them that Benedict will probably not be as bad as they fear. He well knows that the papacy does not fit into conventional liberal-conservative story lines, never mind the patterns of partisan politics in the United States, yet he keeps slipping back into those familiar habits of mind. Thus Benedict's concern for ecumenism and the poor of the world is invoked to counter the perception of the man as a "conservative." As though ecumenism and works of mercy are not part of the bedrock of Catholic orthodoxy. Allen frequently and generously acknowledges Benedict's theological and intellectual stature, but does not draw the reader into reflection about the ideas that constitute his conception of the Christian reality. But perhaps that is to be expected in a quickly compiled account of current events aimed at a popular and mainly liberal readership that is impatient with ideas. *The Rise of Benedict XVI* is a useful chronicle that packs a lot into relatively few pages but, if you're going to read only one book on the transition with thoughtful comparisons between John Paul the Great and Benedict, you might want to wait for Weigel's *God's Choice*. (The title is provocative. It doesn't mean that God directly chooses the pope but that, as Cardinal Ratzinger explained before he became Pope Benedict, God makes sure that nobody will be elected who will permanently compromise the Church's stewardship of the faith.)

■ The quandaries created by the regime of *Roe v. Wade*. In Lufkin, Texas, sixteen-year-old Erica had been trying by various measures to kill the twin babies with whom she was four-months pregnant. She finally asked her boyfriend Gerardo to stomp on her stomach, which he did, and the babies died. Gerardo, but not Erica, is charged with murder. The Associated Press reports, "The case has attorneys on both sides questioning the fairness of a statute that considers one person's crime another person's constitutional right." According to *Roe*, Gerardo was helping Erica exercise her constitutional right to kill her babies. Unlike other abortionists, of course, he was practicing without a license, which is against the law in Texas.

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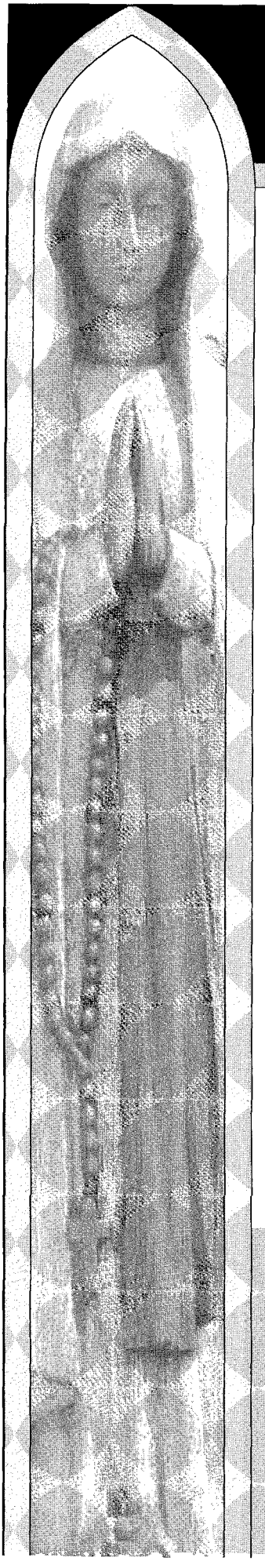

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